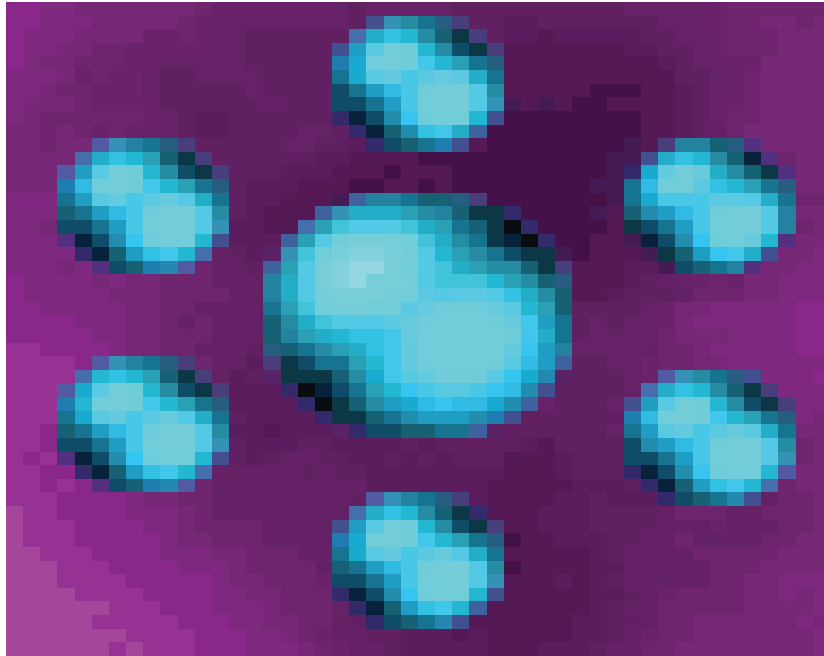


# ***THE GODSPELL***

## **CAMPAIGN SETTING**

By Serge W. Desir, Jr.



A Dicefreaks® Publication



# The Godspell Campaign Setting

By Serge W. Desir, Jr.

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This product contains no Open Game Content.

Dedicated to my brother Ronald C. Desir June 1976 — August 2001  
Without him *The Godspell* would not exist

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## Part I: Mystery of The Godspell

**V**alernus. The capital city of the country of Valdeze. One of the greatest cities in Drm and one of the youngest. Thousands of people, mostly sapiens but with a smattering of dwarves and kin, moved across the white, paved streets. On foot, on horse back, in carriages, they hustled from one place to the other, ignoring all but their destination and their own thoughts. There was little fear in Valernus, particularly near the Silver Circle, the city's center. Silver trestles bearing the Diving Eagle and gold-gilded walls dominated the Silver Circle from which the great octagonal High Court rose. Beside the High Court stood the majestic Glory of the Gauntlet, the largest Ministry temple in the city. And, in the center of the Circle was the great fountain that legends claimed was built by the Last Emperor, the Silver Blood of Valernus. The size of a small lake, the Silver Blood was surrounded by 13 – foot high silver statues of 12 of the 13 Heroes of Noon who had fought and in

some cases died during *The Darkhold* seven hundred years earlier. At its center, rising from the crystalline flow, surrounded by seven rows of thirteen turrets of water, rose the Last Emperor himself, Seeroth the Dark. In his silver hands, rotating on invisible strings, were seven glowing globes.

Like the others, Mortex could not help but look at the Silver Blood, particularly at the statue at the center. But that was all he could afford to do for he and the others had another destination in the Silver Circle. Pushing through the crowds, Mortex shook his head at their ignorance. They felt so safe here in the Silver City. He spied a pair of guards in their conical helmets, holding their polearms. They were everywhere in the city and thickest here. The people felt so safe with them around. If only they knew what he knew, what he was learning. There was no safety here.

As the group pushed through the masses, Mor-

**Valernus (major metropolis) The Silver City:** Conventional (primary) and Magical (secondary); AL LN; 150,000gp limit; 425,250,000gp assets; Population 56,704; Mixed (sapient 89%, kin 5 %, 3% other, dwarf 2%, half-elf 1%). Authority Figures: The High Court of Valdeze (counsel of 15 sapient males) LN; High Justice Aldemeer V male sapient LN, Lord High Commander of the Lord's Guard, Nephemire Thunderblaze sapient male LG; High Minister Kalverstat male sapient LG; Arch Lord Horris III male sapient LN; Head Librarian Duke Dentun male sapient N; Gilded Chalice Guildmaster, Tysoriun Madderghast male sapient LN(E). Currency: Valernus calls its gold pieces vecra. Lesser and greater currencies are accorded the proper metallic identifier. Platinum vecra is all but unheard of even in this wealthy city, while the typical trading coinage is silver vecra.

The capitol city of Valdeze, Valernus is named after the first Archlord and hero of the Bloody Revolt, Valernus I. Valernus is one of the most populous, beautiful, and modern cities Drm. Valernus was designed with the aid of a powerful wizard and dwarves; it is divided into three Walls. The outer wall, known as the Square Wall double as the aqueducts that feed the city's water supply; it includes the Wynding Port, a good many dilapidated and ancient buildings, including duruban ruins, and the bulk of Valernus' population. The wall's walkways, some twenty feet above the ground, are built from the same limestone as the Walls of Valernus and are heavily manned by Lords' Guards. Like all other cities in Valdeze, entrance into Valernus requires a paid toll, as well as the recording of the name and destination of those entering (all Lords' Guards at the Square Wall can read and write). Within the inner wall, or Triangle Wall, are the homes and working places of merchants, artisans, guild masters, and where farmers (independent and otherwise) sell their wares. The great wall, or Wall of the Sphere, is circular, made from marble, and bears repeated images of Valernus' seal, The Diving Eagle. Within the Wall of the Sphere are the many great sights of Valernus. Expanding from a pristine spring the size of a small lake is the Silver Blood of Valernus. Designed by the famous wizard, Seeroth the Dark, this spring is the center of Valernus and one of the dominant spouts always directs visitors to one of the following destinations.

The High Court of Valdeze, a monumental windowless building, is found here as well as the various annexes of the Court. The Houses of Drm, likewise massive marble constructs, are close by. The Houses are where the Justices, visiting Lord Mayors and visiting nobles of the Line of Valernus, foreign dignitaries, and other important persons stay while in Valdeze. Eagle Manor, the fortress of Valernus, is the home of Archlord Horris III. Of ancient, castle-like design, Eagle Manor frequently sees entertainment and similar social events for the powerful in Valdeze. The Glory of the Gauntlet, built of cement and reinforced steel, home to the sitting High Minister of Valdeze, Lord Kalverstat, is also found here. One of the greatest draws for learned men and women in Drm is the magnificent edifice, the towering Valernus Library. The Library is one of the few places in Valernus completely independent of the Ministry, the multi-country church in which Valdeze is incorporated. Legends claim that it was constructed by Seeroth shortly after *The Darkhold* under the authority of the noble house of Dentun of the Line of Valernus. To this day, the Valernus Library is controlled by a Duke of Dentun; indeed, the current duke is named Dentun. One can also find the headquarters of powerful mercantile conglomerates and trading costers like the Gilded Chalice, the Knights of the Gauntlet, and the Blackbear Company. The nefarious thieves' guild, the Rose Guild, is also headquartered in the Silver City.

tex patted his backpack and then felt for his sword. Although it was bound in a peace-guard, he still felt safer knowing that he had his weapon handy should something happen. He knew it was foolish to worry. They were already climbing the stairs of their destination: the Valernus Library. The rectangular edifice scraped the sky and great, silver-stained glass windows caused the entire building to glow in the sun. Marble stairs with marble unicorns, pegasi, and griffons as sentinels led the way to the series of three double doors underneath the massive columns. Across the top were the words, "Find Ignorance's Foe Herein." To Mortex the words look common, but he knew that to Korg – a dwarf – they appeared Dwarven. Even an illiterate could understand the words. Like the Silver Blood, it was said that Seereth the Dark built the Library, the greatest in Valdeze and one of the greatest in Drm. Ibenez had said so himself. Ibenez was certain that they would find their answers therein. Mortex whispered a prayer to Nemaria; given what they went through to reach the Library, he hoped Ibenez was right.

Mortex could not help but stumble as he beheld the interior of the library upon entering the expansive lobby-floor. There were at least a score of floors in the library, each filled with row upon row of shelves, each gorged with books. Volstaff, patted Mortex on his back with his pudgy hands and held him at the elbow.

"Might impressive, isn't it?" the obese man said.

Mortex could only nod when one of the librarians approached.

Although Marta had insisted not only on everyone changing but finding and remaining in a hotel, the others refused, agreeing that the sooner they reached the Library the better. For a moment, Mortex feared that Marta may have been right. The librarian, a young, fey man in simple white robes, arched an eyebrow at the little gnome. Then he sniffed at the earthy odor of the group and eyed their stained clothing and armor. He, like others in the library, stared openly at Marta, a gnome and therefore rarely seen by any but her kind. Then, he gave particular attention to the heavily armored and armed dwarf and the Ibenez'

robed form. Before he could utter word, Volstaff stepped forward.

"Fine day, sir, fine day," the fat man said pleasantly, extending his thick hand towards the youth. "We're weary travelers seeking some guidance and information and are wondering if you could direct us to his grace, Duke Dentun?"

The youth ignored the hand. "Duke Dentun is busy."

Volstaff smiled his best and Mortex hoped that he didn't smell of liquor. "Well, that's just fine. I s'pose you could lend a hand then?"

The youth frowned. "No, I cannot. I came to tell you that your attire is improper for this place."

Volstaff looked down and then around at the others, apparent shock on his flabby face. "Oh, I beg pardon, sir! Had I known that there was a dress code...! Surely, the guard would have stopped us! Perhaps you could direct us to the baths...?"

Mortex and others were stirring now as Volstaff was quickly beginning to grate on the young librarian. Just as the young man was about to issue what was clearly going to be an angry retort, a deep voice intoned. "I am Duke Dentun."

Mortex and the others looked around. Behind them stood a tall, slender man in deep purple and black robes. His flesh was the color of mahogany and his pate was as smooth as glass. Dark eyes regarded them as the goatee framed smirk quivered. Mortex could have sworn that the eyes flickered to his backpack.

"Thank you, Aristicus. I'll answer these travelers' questions."

The young man immediately bowed and left.

"Follow me," the duke said.

The group was led through rows of books. Abruptly, Mortex noticed that they were descending and that the light was dimming. He could feel the tension of his fellows increase as a darkness akin to dusk settled around them and the shelves of books that towered like mountainsides. Just

when Mortex was about to undo the peace-guard and draw his father's sword, the duke motioned for them to enter a large room with a single door. The room within had no windows. Nor any books. Just seven chairs – exactly the right number – and a large table. Once the group gathered inside, all eyeing the surroundings, Dentun followed.

“Please, sit.”

Reluctantly (save for Volstaff), all but Korg obeyed. Dentun looked them over, amusement clear on his face.

“So, you are the so-called ‘Cleansing Fist’,” he announced mildly. “I received your message some time ago and was wondering if you would ever arrive.” He turned to Ibenez. “What is it you ask of me?”

Ibenez seemed taken aback at being singled out, having grown so accustomed to remaining in the background while in Valernus. Mortex fingered his sword hilt again.

Ibenez looked at the others, all of whom possessed indecision on their faces. Finally, he turned to Dentun and said, “We heard that you are a chief authority on the mysteries of Drm... That you know more than anyone else about the continent-realm's history. That your only rival is Mandl's Xpa the Renown.”

Dentun shrugged non-committally. “I am well read.”

Ibenez licked his thin lips. “We... We were hoping we could pay for your knowledge as a sage – ”

“And your silence,” Mortex put in when he saw the man's eyes flicker to his backpack again.

Dentun's smirk expanded into a smile and Mortex unconsciously squirmed in his chair. *What an unusual man*, he thought. He glanced at Korg who had not taken his eye from the man since he met them above. If the duke was evil, Korg would have already spoken up, so Mortex decided that his reactions to the man may be out of order and merely a symptom of the group's recent experiences.

“My silence is assured,” Dentun declared, his eyes sweeping across the room. “After all, I would hate to draw Ministry attention to the Library and I suspect that the information – the knowledge – you seek would certainly attract Ministry agents.” He nodded, his smile disappearing. Mortex squirmed again. He noticed that even Volstaff was eying the man carefully and that Daerian had long since dropped any pretense of civility, resting both hands on the butts of her throwing axes. The man leaned against the table and whispered. “Your real concern should be whether or not you should be seeking answers to the questions you've encountered.”

Korg growled, “We'll determine what questions we should be asking, thank you.”

Volstaff said in a more diplomatic tone, “That's right. And we're prepared to pay you for your services. We don't have much more time to waste. Now, how much?”

“200 silver vecra now,” came the immediate reply, “with additional payment to be determined depending on the time spent.”

Mortex found it odd at the comfort he felt at hearing the man's response. The fact that he was charging such an exorbitant fee made Dentun seem like nothing more than a typical man making a living at the expense of others. The others likewise calmed. Marta reached into her backpack and took out a small, gold ring, and placed it on the table. “This is worth at least 230 vecra,” she said. “I figure you should be able to get a bit more with the right people... And attract less attention than you would with bags of coin.”

Mortex's ease was challenged when Dentun did not even bother to look at the ring. “Very well,” the duke said without so much as reaching for his payment, “Ask me your questions.”

If the others noticed the duke's lack of interest in his fee, they gave no indication. Instead, Volstaff – seated nearest to the duke and across from Ibenez – turned to Mortex and nodded. Mortex looked around at his companions before he reached into his bag and pulled it out.

The book was large and heavy. The covers were a dull, black leather and the pages were gold-gilded. Although he tried not to look at the cover, his eyes were drawn to it nevertheless. Circling on the cover like bubbles on water were seven half circles. Like the globes held in the Last Emperor's hand in the fountain outside, six protruding half-circles surrounded a seventh. Each rotated on its own axis as they revolved in perfect symmetry on the book's cover. Mortex placed the book on the table and pushed it – eagerly – towards the duke. Like the others, Mortex studied the duke's face as he looked at the book that was the source of the Fist's most recent struggles.

The duke's expression was indiscernible when he looked up at them. The smirk was gone and Mortex was certain that for a moment the duke's eyes went completely black but associated the effect with the light.

Quietly, the duke said, "How nice. You have found a *Cilidian*."

Dentun did not touch the book, but stood and began to pace the room. "I am glad that you have decided to come to me about this. What you have found, and doubtlessly risked your lives for, is a priceless item filled with ancient knowledge."

"So, the tales told in the *Cilidan* are true?" Ibenez inquired.

Dentun offered an indulgent smile. "True? No more or less true than legends and myths."

Volstaff smirked. "That's a nice, cryptic answer, sir."

Dentun shrugged, "If you wish. It does not change it from being correct. A *Cilidian* is filled with many stories about the past and suggestions about the future. It tells the stories of the gods, the creation of humenity, and the eventual destruction of our world. Some claim that much of what is in the *Cilidian* has come to past while others scoff at its words. In the end, whatever truth that is in the *Cilidian* will depend upon the reader and his own soul."

"So, what you're saying is that the *Cilidian* offers metaphors for life? Parables and symbols?"

"What I'm saying is that the *Cilidian* offers truth and lies, symbols and reality."

Korg snorted, "You're not earning that ring, you know."

Dentun gave the dwarf one of his unsettling smiles. "Oh, I will more than earn that ring by the time we're done... Have any of you read any of the book?"

Ibenez nodded. Mortex noted that beads of sweat suddenly appeared on his forehead and that his always pale skin whitened even further. "I did. It was... It was... An experience." A cold tension gripped the room for a few, silent moments. "The Seven Spheres are everywhere in the *Cilidian*," Ibenez said thickly, nodding at the book's cover. "I... I always thought they were a myth, that the stories told about them were just tales." His eyes flickered to the book. "Now – "

"Now you're not sure." Dentun finished. "If there is one thing that I firmly believe as a scholar and as a man given to fancy, it's that the *Cilidian* is honest where the Seven Spheres are involved. It is the Seven Spheres that have set the course of history for the continent-realm. Perhaps even the entire world.

"You saw the Silver Blood of Valernus on your way to the Library. You saw Seeroth holding the Seven Spheres above his head. You know the stories of Seeroth the Dark and the other Heroes of Noon and their victory in *The Darkhold*. You know that the Spheres are the central issues of the tales of that Great War. But, *The Darkhold* was only the most recent time during which lust for the Spheres wreaked havoc across all of Drm and likely into the other continent-realms..."

"Wait," Daerian interjected, "Other continent-realms?"

Dentun nodded. "Oh, yes. There are three continent-realms in this world that is called Mid-lorr. Ours is Drm which, according to the *Cilidian*, is the smallest and the most heavily contested by its pantheon of gods and collection of mortals. Another is Linscend, which the *Cilidian* says is ruled by a single goddess and overrun by elemen-

**Cilidian:** Meaning “secret” in an Elven dialect, the Cilidian is most widely read in dwarf and sapient lands, and well known in the lands of other people. Regarded with nigh-religious fervor, most races, nations, and countries have edited and adjusted the Cilidian to support their beliefs and contentions. Throughout history, no one has claimed to have seen, much less read, the original Cilidian, which – according to legend – was written during the Age of Mist. However, there are many among the learned that believe that there are more faithful copies of the Cilidian that tell the true story not only of the creation of Midlorr, but the end of the world. Called the “second-source Cilidians,” these 50 or texts have been scattered across the continent-realm.

The Cilidian addresses the nature of the Cosmos, the gods, and the acts of the earliest Humen. It is the source of the belief in the Great Reckoning, the end of the world. Most importantly, though, the Cilidian identifies that there is something so powerful and grand, that even the gods themselves lost after it: The Godspell. Divided into three parts according to the Cilidian, “the secret” concentrates most its attention on the Seven Spheres, arguably the greatest third of The Godspell. The use or casting of The Godspell will lead to the Great Reckoning, the end of the world. Most modern copies of the Cilidian do not include most, if any, of the material on the Seven Spheres; such associations have long since been turned into children’s nursery rhymes and fairy tales.

There are a number of ways to discern a second-source Cilidian. First, any person – literate or not – can read the text. The material seems to be written in the language of the reader. A second-source Cilidian is divided into seven chapters, or Axes: The Creation and The Godspell, History of the Aulspawn, The Saldrash Wars and the Clash of Spirits, Words of the Aldra, The Creation of Humen, The Nature of Humen, and The Reckoning. Another telling clue of a second source Cilidian is its ability to change its size. It can be as small as a piece of parchment or taller in height than a dwarf. Third, a second-source Cilidian is filled with life-like images that seem to move on the page. The surest means to discern a secondary-source Cilidian is the fact that, on each cover, there are six evenly distanced globes literally revolving around a central, revolving slightly larger globe. To this day, no speaking of The Word has managed to reproduce such a feat. It is generally believed that the true, original Cilidian bears similar features and elements.

The following constitute effects received from reading a second-source Cilidian (a reading of the original is guaranteed to be far more impressive):

- Confer a +1 insight bonus to all Knowledge (Godspell) checks for every day spent reading the Cilidian (see Knowledge (Godspell) for more information on this skill). It typically takes seven days to read the material in its entirety.
- For each day of reading, the reader suffers a 14% chance of being struck temporarily insane from the material in the book. This chance is cumulative, increasing each day by 14%. Every time the victim fails this check, he suffers from a catatonic stupor lasting 2-7 days.
- A complete reading of the Cilidian confers a +2 bonus to the reader’s primary ability score if he manages not to go mad. If the reader is multi-classed with two different primary abilities, the bonus goes to the ability represented by the highest class.
- The knowledge gleaned from the Cilidian is so intense, so maddening, that the mortal mind cannot willingly retain it. After reading a secondary source Cilidian, the reader does not remember any of what was read, the information becoming lost in the subconscious. However, when the reader is confronted with signs of Great Reckoning, deals with a legendary figure (like Seereth the Dark, a Named One, or some similar persona), views any part of The Godspell, or interacts directly with a god or cosmic entity, the PC must make a Will DC 21 + 1 for each chapter of the Cilidian read (up to +7). Those who fail are struck with a catatonia for seven rounds, and are treated as if stunned. Thereafter, the reader receives a +7 temporary bonus to his primary ability score for fourteen rounds. Once exposed to a specific stimuli (like one specific Sphere, a specific god, a specific personality, etc), the victim never has to roll against this “curse” again.

#### **NEW SKILL: KNOWLEDGE (THE GODSPELL)**

For those seeking to learn more about the mysteries of Midlorr, this unique knowledge skill works in tandem with other skills when *The Godspell* is involved. Knowledge (*The Godspell*) ranks may only be taken once a PC is made aware of the truth of *The Godspell*; that is, most PCs should not take ranks in this skill at first level.

Knowledge (*The Godspell*) provides a synergy bonus to any check directly related to *The Godspell*. Thus, when reading a second-source or the original *Cilidian*, one with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (*The Godspell*) would reduce the % check of being struck dumb by 2 for each day the *Cilidian* is read; another example would be attempting to use a Sphere to avoid adverse effects. The benefits of this skill are not only applied to the components of *The Godspell* itself, but to all things related to it (certain artifacts, cosmic and divine beings, etc.). At what point synergy bonuses are applicable is ultimately up to the DM.



tal forces. The third is Oriund, a place of supreme theism, fate, and atheism for there no gods dwell...."

"So the *Cilidian* accounts for that as well... For three different realms on one world," Ibenez said wonderingly. "And of different pantheons of gods?"

"And you've been to these other realms, of course, to know all this," Korg said dryly.

Dentun continued unhindered. "Yes, different groupings. You know what the *Cilidian* says about the gods, the Saldra... You know how it speaks of their committing to a *Pact of Dominance* after their war, the *Clash of Spirits*, Ibenez."

Mortex started. Only Ibenez identified himself. The rest had never introduced themselves to Dentun. He glanced around the room, but only Korg and he managed to exchange silent communication. Ibenez, however, shook his head slowly. "I – I don't remember exactly how it went. I think I read something about it from Seeroth the Dark though..."

Giving Ibenez a look of pleasant surprise, Dentun said, "You're referring to Seeroth's book, *The Pact of Dominance and the Limitations of Mortal Magic*. I believe it was written about 2500 years ago... Let's see if I can recall the lines. I think... he wrote:

*And so it came to pass that the Clash of Spirits ended. The gods, also called the Saldra, looked upon the world of Midlorr. Knowing that their foes from the Realms Beyond still lusted after the power that dwelt on Midlorr, the Saldra also knew that within their number were those willing to destroy the planet to sate their own greed. The Saldra knew that this would bring about their desolation since they would eventually need the gift of faith from the mortals yet to breathe upon Midlorr. So, rather than continue onto another battle, the Saldra agreed to a Pact of Dominance.*

*Through the Pact, the Saldra agreed that neither they nor the beings from Beyond would enter Midlorr. Neither through aspects of their being nor through direct intervention would this be acceptable. Yet, the Saldra knew that they needed to earn the faith of the mortals that would eventually worship them. The Saldra would grant miracles to those select mortals who wished to carry forth the will of the Saldra.*

*Some of the Saldra cried out. What would happen, these asked, if the mortals grew too strong and hoped to contest the gods? Others wondered about the mortals who would seek power from those from Beyond rather than the true gods. So, the Saldra devised another plan. They would agree with some of those from Beyond for small numbers of mortal worshippers in order to preserve the peace. Next, the Saldra bound within their Pact a weakness on mortal magic. This weakness forbids the use of any magic that would allow a cosmic or divine being direct access to Midlorr. The Saldra cursed any magic that came close to challenging their divine might when cast by mortals within Midlorr. Such power was declared Forbidden.*

*In the end, the Saldra agreed that they would divvy the world into three portions, with a group of gods laying claim to each. The Sala took Linscend and the Drala took Oriund. In the end, the weakest among them became the gods of Drm, the Aldra. They, like their brethren in Linscend and Oriund, colluded to ensure that their mortal worshippers would not learn of the other realms and gods, thereby guaranteeing their hegemony until such time that The Godspell could be theirs. Further, the Aldra went a step further than their brethren by binding themselves directly to their worshippers. Although the Aldra do not necessarily need worship to exist, they do need worship to maintain their power. They also are sensitive to the evolution of humenity; as the earliest mortals changed and evolved, so too did the gods they worshipped.*

Dentun looked at Ibenez inquiring, "Does that sound about right?"

As the others stared at him, awed at his recollect powers, Ibenez nodded. "You recite that as if you wrote it yourself!"

Dentun shrugged. "I *should* know it. I have been the chief librarian here for decades as was my father before me. But enough about me. If Seeroth is right, the reason we only know of the Aldra is because only they have rights to Drm. With their priesthoods, the Aldra have done all in their power to ensure that their brethren from within or without do not enter Midlorr. Likewise have they stood against the predations of cosmic entities... Yet, in the end, the Aldra all seek to find loopholes in the *Pact* they signed for they, like all beings, desire the power of the Seven Spheres."

**Midlorr:** The world of The Godspell Campaign is called Midlorr. Although no one knows for certain, it is safe to assume that Midlorr is the size of Earth. Generally speaking, it possesses many of the same geographical and meteorological aspects of Earth. However, there are plenty of differences beyond just the magic the oozes across the planet.

In The Godspell cosmology, Midlorr exists in the material plane, referred to as the Mortal Coil. The Mortal Coil is an infinite space that largely resembles modern theories and ideas about the known universe. There are an infinite number of planets, heavenly bodies, and the like within the Mortal Coil. The Mortal Coil is surrounded by the Land of Dreams, or ethereal plane, a place possibilities and non-possibilities; the Land of Dreams itself links the Mortal Coil to the Elements. Composed of the four prime elements (air, earth, fire, and water) and the two energies (death and life), the Elements are the building blocks of existence in the Mortal Coil. There are gaps in the Mortal Coil known as the Void Between (or the Darkness Between the Stars). These gaps are home to Mortal Coils that could have been and weren't or Mortal Coils that were and then ceased to exist. Some refer to these places as the "far realms."

The Mortal Coil is also hugged by Endless Boundary, better known as the astral plane. The Endless Boundary is a land of nowhere where things possible and impossible are not just suggestion (as they often are in the Land of Dreams) but insurances. Tied to the Endless Boundary are the Realms Beyond, the Realms of Spirits (sometimes referred to as the outer planes). Here are the Ideals manifested in the semblance of form. From Heaven and Hell to The Abyss and Arborea, all things that can be felt, thought, or perceived by mortals exist in one form or another. Not only do the souls of the dead end up here, but most cosmic and divine beings are found in the Realms Beyond.

Midlorr is divided into three distinct continent-realms, a designation for continents between which mundane and most forms of magical travel is impossible. It is unknown how beings may travel between the three continent-realms, although the Cilidian promises that this feat will be accomplished during the Great Reckoning. The three continent-realms are Drm, Linscend, and Oriund. Each has its own pantheon of gods which are known to the learned as the Saldra. However, The Godspell binds the continent-realms together literally and symbolically.

Most of The Godspell Campaign and this text revolves around the events and personalities of Drm.

"You keep mentioning the Seven Spheres," Marta said. "We've all heard of them. I heard them in nursery rhymes as a child. I've heard them sung about in pubs. But... Well, what exactly are they?"

Dentun took a deep breath as he folded his arms. After a few moments of silent contemplation, he announced, "The Seven Spheres are the Power of God."

The room was silent for a few moments as the duke looked off, clearly pondering deeply. Korg broke the silence.

"The 'Power of God?'" The dwarf looked around at his companions and sniffed. "I told you these sage-types were mad charlatans."

"I don't think we've heard enough to have an established position," Ibenez cautioned. "That's why we're here, Korg."

"We're here because you and our brother acolyte here insisted we come," Korg corrected, nodding at Ibenez and Volstaff. "Now that we've wasted time here, I think we can leave, find an inn, and rest while we decide to go to Mandl to find someone who knows what they're talking about... Or head to Burquebain where we're guaranteed to find someone with some sense."

"You know, you seem awfully keen on heading back to Burquebain, Korg," Marta said testily. "Besides, considering the effort we put into getting this book and that it's filled with all kinds of talk of these Sphere, I think we should hear some more." Then, she mumbled under her breath, "We already paid him anyway."

While the bickering persisted, Dentun returned from his reverie and indulged the group with another of his odd smiles. Although he did not raise his voice above a whisper, it cut through the conversation and returned all attention to him.

"You have cause to be incredulous, Korg," Dentun said in the tone of one used to being doubted. "The idea that seven globes could house the power of God is a difficult idea to accept. But I can assure you, it's true."

Volstaff cleared his throat. "I think Korg shares some of the same concerns I have, sir... He and I are both dedicated to the will of gods; myself to Nemaria and Korg to Barthramus. But we all know that there are multiple divine beings. What you're saying is that these Seven Spheres

possess power akin to that manifested by our gods?" Volstaff laughed and shook his head. "I'm sorry, but I have to agree with Korg: that is madness."

Dentun's smile evaporated. "You misunderstand me, Volstaff. I never said that the Spheres were the equal of your gods. They are the Power of God. They transcend the status of the immortal beings you and others worship."

Volstaff's typical affability disappeared when

**The Gods of Drm:** The Saldra is divine pantheon of Midlorr that, according the Cilidian, is divided by strife and envy for The Godspell. This enmity between the Saldra forced them to divide into three separate camps after the Clash of Spirits and the signing of the Pact of Dominance. The camps and their respective continent-realms are: the Aldra for Drm, the Drala for Oriund, and the Sala for Linscend. While there are other divine (and cosmic) beings in Midlorr, the Saldra have a connection to the planet and its wonders in a way surpassing all would-be interlopers. While the Saldra have suffered the interference of some foreign pantheons, like the dwarven Masters of the Mountain or the elven Children of the Glade, other gods and cosmic beings have earned the Saldra's undying enmity. Such enmities are among the only things that could prompt the Saldra to temporarily unite. The Saldra are all dedicated to gaining the power of The Godspell... or else ensuring that no one uses it.

The Aldra are the most cohesive of the Saldra. While the pantheons of the Drala and Sala have been all but destroyed (only one Sala remains and it is believed that the Drala are all dead), the Aldra have proven resilient in the face of powerful, willful mortals. There have been fewer cosmic and interloper-god incursions in the Drm due to Aldra cohesiveness. However, there continues to be great conflicts among the Aldra. There are many cliques among the Aldra; in the distant past, the Aldra more accurately were comprised of four or five distinct sub-pantheons that were further supplemented by outsider proxies and servants. These sub-pantheons were regionally based and with limited interaction. As mortals progressed in power and sophistication, the Aldra were forced to evolve and interact with each other to greater degrees. The Aldra pantheon, as it exists now, is far different from that even five thousand years ago and has recently evolved even further with the creation of the Ministry.

What follows are lists of the best known Aldra, their alignments, portfolios, domains, and weapon of choice. Also included for ease of reference are the better known racial deities of the dwarves, elves, and hobgoblins.

**Table 1 – 1: The Aldra**

<i><b>Name (Alignment)</b></i>	<i><b>Rank</b></i>	<i><b>Domains</b></i>	<i><b>Favored Weapon</b></i>
Arunix (LE)	G	Destruction, Evil, Law, Trickery	Long sword
Aurlarist (N)	G	None (Aurlarist only accepts druids)	Shearers (scimitar)
Ausarii (CG)	I	Air, Charm, Luck, Trickery	Cat's claw (dagger)
Barthramus (LG)	G	Earth, Knowledge, Law, Protection, War	Warhammer
Brumbd (LN)	I	Earth, Law, Plant, Protection, Time	Hammer
Bythal Dalax (LE)	I	Death, Evil, Law	Battle-Axe
Cabernasus (CE)	I	Air, Chaos, Evil, Trickery	Spiked Chain
Celzar (LG)	G	Creation, Good, Law, Protection, Strength	Long sword
Churarbus (CN)	G	Air, Chaos, Trickery	Dagger
Dauth Alman (LE)	G	Destruction, Evil, Law, Trickery	Morningstar
Edian (NE)	I	Evil, Luck, Trickery	Dagger
Faeynas (LG)	L	Good, Healing, Law, Protection, Water	Shorts word
Ganlarid (CG)	L	Animal, Good, Luck, Trickery	Shortbow
Havas (N)	I	Fire, Destruction, Healing, Sun	Fire (shortbow)
Helias (NG)	L	Charm, Luck, Protection, Travel	Rapier
Iycarthis (N)	I	Charm, Luck, Travel	Dagger
Khamund (NE)	G	Death, Destruction, Evil	Scythe
Lanira (CG)	G	Chaos, Charm, Good, Healing, Protection	Quarterstaff
Lestonises (LE)	L	Destruction, Law, Water	Flail
Malvolans (CE)	G	Death, Destruction, Fire, Strength, War	Greatsword
Marlon (CN)	I	Chaos, Luck, Trickery	Dagger
Mastrum (CN)	L	Air, Destruction, Earth, Strength	Mace
Minarthris (CN)	I	Chaos, Travel, Water	Wave (net)
Nemaria (NG)	G	Air, Good, Healing, Luck, Sun	Mace
Ostensis (CE)	I	Chaos, Death, Evil, Moon	Shorts word
Pyaras (NG)	I	Good, Healing, Strength	Unarmed
Stakarth (CN)	I	Air, Chaos, Luck	Longbow
Talamas (CG)	G	Chaos, Good, Luck, Magic, Protection	Long sword
Thore Mire (LN)	G	Air, Creation, Knowledge, Law, Sun	War hammer
Vhanthermis (LG)	I	Charm, Healing, Law, Protection, Strength	Gavel (war hammer)

**Table 1 – 2: The Aldra Cont'd**

<i><b>Name</b></i>	<i><b>Symbol</b></i>	<i><b>Portfolio</b></i>
Arunix	A bloody long sword	Hobgoblins, Precision, Domination, War
Aurlarist	A green and blue sphere	Nature, Fertility, Sex, Lust, Birth
Ausarii	Cat's Eyes surrounded by stars	Stars, Secrets, Guidance, Cats, Dreams
Barthramus	Anvil and two hammers	Dwarves, Law, Order, Defense, Contemplation
Brumbd	Gold mountain	Earth, Mountains, Rocks, Stones, Metals, Patience
Bythal Dalax	Serpent coiled around dagger	Vengeance, Punishment, Curses, Assassins, Poison, Serpents
Cabernasus	Four chains emerging from a cloud	Winds, Carnal Pleasures, False Hope, Drunkenness
Celzar	Gauntlet holding a long sword	Salvation, Righteousness, Divine Right, Sanctuary, Vigilance
Churarbus	Bat over the moon	Night, Loss, Forgetfulness, Imagination
Dauth Alman	Crown over thunderclouds	Damnation, False Redemption, Power, Decadent Rulers, Intrigue, Pride
Edian	Many and varied	Lies, Deceit, Subterfuge, Shadows, Ignorance, Treachery
Faeynas	Sword splitting a waterfall	Purity, Loyalty, Courage, Cleanliness, Springs
Ganlarid	Wolf on the sun	Summer, Woodlands, Fun, Mischief, Freedom, Archers
Havas	A fiery nimbus	Fires, Heat, Light, Destruction, Beginnings
Helias	An open road	Travelers, Guides, Adventure, Curiosity
Iycarthis	A bag of coins	Money, Trade, Wealth, Merchants
Khamund	Horned skull on a yellow mist	Disease, Decay, Death, Insanity, Darkness, Terror, Nightmares
Lanira	Dancing woman	Love, Beauty, Health, Comfort, Dance, Contentment
Lestonises	An ice crown	Cold, Tyranny, Callousness, Stagnation
Malvolans	A black flaming sword	War, Hate, Destruction, Fire, Rage
Marlon	Multi-colored leaf	Change, Autumn, Twilight, Anarchy, Chance
Mastrum	Lightning on a black surface	Storms, Natural Disasters, Opposition, Challenges, Strength
Minarthris	Three part wave	Oceans, Rivers, Travel, Time
Nemaria	White falcon over the sun	Light, Spring, Dawn, Optimism, Joy, Birds, Friendship
Ostensis	The moon, the bottom half dripping blood	Murder, Bloodlust, Lycanthropy, Curses, Undeath
Pyaras	Motionless male body	Satisfaction, Endurance, Sacrifice, Rest, Peace
Stakarth	A tornado	Winds, Storms, Rain, Possibilities
Talamas	A tree with multicolored leaves	Elves, Freedom, Magic, Creativity, Pleasure
Thore Mire	The sun	Order, Judgment, Common Sense, Illumination, the sun
Vhanthermis	A roaring lion	Justice, Truth, Honesty, Mercy, Forgiveness, Duty

**Forbidden Magic:** The Pact of Dominance is a multipart law that dictates the use of magic in Midlorr and cosmic or divine access by being from Beyond. Most familiar with the Pact of Dominance know that it bars cosmic or divine access to Midlorr under most circumstances. A god cannot use its own magic to gain access to the planet. By god, the Pact refers to any being with a divine rank of 0 or higher (which would include avatars). In addition, although a mortal worshipper could attempt to bring a god into Midlorr, such an act results in a greatly weakened god in the best of cases and likely an avatar in most cases (worst case scenarios usually do far worse than kill the mortal). The restrictions for mortals are not as severe due to the fact that mortals did not sign the Pact. However, mortals are limited through the concept of forbidden magic.

Forbidden magic was introduced in the Dicefreaks publication, The Gates of Hell. Although The Gates of Hell implies that forbidden magic is epic level magic, such a perspective only applies to the idea as presented in The Gates of Hell. For The Godspell, epic magic is synonymous with forbidden magic because it severely (or ought to severely) bend the rules of the Mortal Coil. These spells have built-in limitations and backlash effects that typically are doubled in intensity in Midlorr.

Certain core spells fall under the definition of forbidden magic so far as the Pact is concerned. Any spell that can open a portal between this world and the Realms Beyond, and/or any spell that is potent and stable enough to allow a divine rank 0 being access to Midlorr is considered forbidden. Thus gate, plane shift, and similar magicks are forbidden magic.

### **Rules for The Word and forbidden magic**

The Word is a concept that represents the source of reality, the Ideal. In most other worlds, The Word is known as "magic."

The ability to manipulate The Word manifests itself in different ways. The awesome might of a deity or planar being is simply the manipulation of The Word at the highest levels of understanding. Other creatures, like dragons and other aulspawn, are born with a connection to The Word, allowing them to not just cause magical effects, but to breathe fire, destroy minds, and any number of effects. Most mortals are not so blessed with an inborn ability to use The Word, although mortals are able to learn. The best known practitioners of The Word among mortals are the arcane spellcasters. Bards have unlocked the symbolic ties between music, the voice, or other forms of expression and the Ideal. Sorcerers are invested with The Word and use its power instinctively, lending credence to theories purporting a common heritage with aulspawn or outsiders. Wizards use a variety of techniques, some fairly simple and others incredibly complex, to manipulate The Word through years of study.

Divine spellcasters receive their power in The Word through belief in an ideal, cosmic entity, god, or Nature. While gods and other immortal spirits divest portions of their access to The Word to their servants, Nature itself is imbued with magic and those dedicated to it may manipulate some of that power.

There are also those who train themselves to use The Word for very specific ends. Some unarmed combatants, like monks, have learned to use The Word to empower their bodies while others use The Word to naturally enchant their weapons or armor.

Wielding The Word does not come without a price. Due to the Pact of Dominance, there are aspects of The Word that can bring woe to the unwary or unwise.

- **Summon Monster and Summon Nature's Ally spells:** These spells are not affected by the Pact of Dominance. In Midlorr, creatures summoned by these spells appear translucent (usually animals and elementals) or transparent (outsiders), reflecting their partial existence in the Mortal Coil. The partial existence and short time-frame of their intrusion is such that their acts are unlikely to have a severe impact on the material plane. It is not unusual for the summoner to actually summon a specific creature repeatedly who, particularly for divine casters, functions as a kind of "guardian" (assume that if a creature possesses a CR of 6 or greater, that it is a specific being with a name, history, and relationship with the summoner is summoned).

- *Secure Shelter, Secret Chest, etc:* These spells are not affected by the Pact of Dominance. Such spells create a pocket dimension similar to that of a bag of holding that does not allow entrance from Beyond into the Mortal Coil.
- *Major and Minor Creation:* These spells are not affected by the Pact of Dominance. Most wizards and scholars of The Word believe that these spells conjure trace materials of the actual object from across the planet itself to create new, “magical” objects.
- *Planar Ally and Planar Binding spells:* These spells fall under the auspices of the Pact of Dominance as they blatantly violate both the letter and spirit of the agreement. The casting of these spells results in the caster having to make a Spellcraft check = 10 + spell level + CR of the creature involved. Failure indicates that the spell fails and that the caster suffers 100 xp per point by which the save was failed. Success results in the spell succeeding; however, even in success there is a 3% chance per the creature’s CR that another creature of the diametrically opposed alignment but equal CR value is called to the Mortal Coil 7d10 miles from the allied or bound creature. This creature receives a Will save DC 15 + the spell level to overcome the need to track down (which it does naturally) and defeat the physical form of the allied or bound creature; in doing so, both creatures are returned to their appropriate Realm Beyond. The creature may not use its spell resistance, if applicable, to avoid this effect. If the creature succeeds in the save, it may return whence it came or remain in the Mortal Coil to do as it pleases for as long as it likes (which still includes effortlessly tracking down the allied or bound creature).
- *Plane Shift:* This spell falls under the auspices of the Pact of Dominance as it blatantly violates both the letter and spirit of the agreement. When plane shift is cast, the caster must succeed in a Fortitude save DC 17 + his spellcasting modifier; failure results in the spell being wasted and the caster suffering a flat 500 xp loss and an additional 100 xp per point by which the save was failed; if there are multiple participants, each participant also loses 100 xp. Success results in the spell functioning as per normal except that within 7d10 miles of the casting, an extraplanar creature appears in the Mortal Coil (if the caster is traveling to an Element, an elemental appears; if the caster is traveling to a Realm Beyond, an outsider appears). The challenge rating of the extraplanar creature is equal to 1/3 of the caster’s character levels rounded up. The creature is stuck within a seven mile radius of its appearance until the caster returns to Drm after which point it can either return whence it came or remain in the Mortal Coil indefinitely.

*Gate:* This spell falls under the auspices of the Pact of Dominance as it blatantly violates both the letter and spirit of the agreement. Quite possibly the greatest non-epic conjuration, gate grossly violates every aspect of the Pact. As such, its nature is severely limited in Midlorr. Gate cannot be used to call or contact any unique being (effectively any being in possession of cosmic or divine rank 0). When gate is cast, the caster must succeed in a Fortitude save DC 19 + his spellcasting modifier; failure results the spell being wasted and the caster suffering a flat 1000 xp loss and an additional 500 xp per point by which the save was failed. Success results in the spell functioning as per normal except that within 1d6+1 miles of the casting, an extraplanar creature appears in the Mortal Coil (if the caster is traveling to an Element, an elemental appears; if the caster is traveling to a Realm Beyond, an outsider appears). The CR of the extraplanar creature is equal to the caster’s character levels. The creature has free range in Drm and may do as it pleases. The faulty casting of an epic version of gate (usually referred to as Uriyens’ summons) by Uriyens the Green resulted in the Demon Wars when thousands of fiends (including a few powerful cosmic fiends) and seven evil gods were called to Drm.



he declared, "Blasphemy, Your Grace. If I were in agreement with the Ministry, I would call the Vi-ziers in here right now to question you."

Dentun shrugged. "It may well be blasphemous to you, Volstaff but I am right." Dentun nodded to Ibenez. "Why did the gods sign the *Pact of Dominance*, Ibenez? What motivated them?"

"Well... The *Cilidian* states that the gods, the Sal-dra, signed the *Pact* to keep each other from exploring the world in search of the Seven Spheres." He paused and offered Volstaff an apologetic look. "They... They wanted to become God."

Volstaff made a particularly nasty sound and Korg sniffed again.

"So, you're telling us that these Seven Spheres are more than just powerful crystal balls?" Volstaff inquired heatedly. "The stories about *The Darkhold* certainly do not speak to the kind of power you associate with these Spheres."

"That is because," Dentun said without hesitation, "the stories have been manipulated through out history to lessen the impact and import of the Seven. For some, this was necessary to uphold the hegemony of the divine. For others, it was to defend against the idea that such power was accessible somewhere out in the world. And, for a few, like Seeroth the Dark, it was a matter of con-

trolling knowledge. The fewer that knew of the truth of the Seven Spheres, the fewer there would be to seek them out until the right time."

"Really?" Korg asked meanly. "So, how is it that you know so much about them?"

Dentun smirked and considered a moment before answering. "If one reads between the lines and knows where to look, the truth can be uncovered." He nodded towards the *Cilidian*. "Your recent experiences relate to that. I doubt that you expected the treasure for which you sought to be a tome, yet the treasure within is greater than all but the greatest artifacts and relics of the continent-realm."

Mortex said, "If these Spheres are supposed to be so great, why hasn't anyone seen one in so long? How come no one's used them?"

"And what," Ibenez inserted, "can they do?"

Dentun said almost too happily, "You should ask, 'What *can't* they do?' Although I don't always agree with him, my colleague, Xpa the Renown of Mandl, wrote an interesting treatise on the Spheres. A very insightful discourse that I'll procure for you once our conversation concludes. But, in essence, The Seven Spheres, when united, grant incredible power to any that wields them. As I already said: they offer power surpassing that of the gods."

**The Seven Spheres and The Godspell Campaign Setting:** One of the central features of The Godspell Campaign is the Seven Spheres. The Seven Spheres, as detailed shortly, are powerful artifacts that have the ability to catapult PCs to extreme levels of power. With one of the Seven Spheres, PCs can easily accept challenges four or more levels higher with a significant expectation of success. However, it is important to remember that the Seven Spheres, like any artifacts in the Dungeons and Dragons game, are as much plot devices as they are objects to pursue and possess. The manner in which the Seven Spheres are used in a game determines the kind of Godspell experience DMs and players may expect.

The atmosphere in The Godspell Campaign is one of dark mystery of potentially epic proportions. The uncovering of the mysteries of The Godspell should ideally begin at lower levels (ideally 1<sup>st</sup>) as the PCs are introduced to the world. Intrigue is a central motif of the setting and PCs should always feel as if there is something greater in the world beyond just waiting around the corner for them to discover. The Godspell can easily be played as a series of small, regional concerns in which PCs become immersed; however, the setting works best as a place in which PCs stumble into seemingly unrelated events that are sometimes directly and other times indirectly tied to each other. The Seven Spheres can and should have a role in these experiences.

The Spheres are best used lightly and with an air of mystery. Due to their potentially tremendous power, DMs should enforce the drawbacks and curses associated with Sphere; since the Spheres are designed to increase in power based upon PC experience, the use of drawbacks should ensure balance. In spite of this, the discovery of a Sphere should be one of detective work and the willingness to think outside the box. The Spheres are not the only elements that can be used this way of course. As the story within this introduction indicates, the discovery of a second-source Cilidian conveys the same intrigue of a Sphere, albeit on a far smaller scale.

Acquisition of a Sphere should not result in an easy path for PCs. Not only will PCs have to worry about when and how to use the Sphere, but they should be concerned about divine infection and, more importantly, if anyone should have access to such powerful artifacts. While some PCs may go on quests to find and use other Spheres (doubtlessly drawing the attention of countless adversaries), others may decide that the Spheres should be sequestered away, never to be used. Whatever the decision, the manner in which the Spheres are treated will dictate the quality of a Godspell game.





## Excerpts from *The Seven Spheres* by Xpa the Renown, Master Sage of Mandl

*There is no exaggeration in stating that the Seven Spheres, the mysterious artifacts of immeasurable power, are the cause of all the major calamities and events in the continent-realm of Drm.*

*Whether directly or indirectly, the Seven Spheres are the reason for all major wars, including the devastating Darkhold... It is a certainty that there are no other items in all of Creation more coveted or feared than the Seven Spheres of God.*

*As I stated in earlier writings, the Seven Spheres are one third of a larger power: The Godspell. The Spheres, also referred to as the Globes of God, when joined with the power of the monolithic Oracles and the shattered Mosaic, have the power to create a full-fledged deity more powerful than all other known entities in Creation. According to the Cilidian, The Godspell is the "remains" of the Creator, the Entity responsible for all there is, can be, may be, will be, etc. This Creator, determining that its existence would adversely impact the free-will of all lesser creatures, allowed itself to be sundered and robbed of its Singular Sentience. Of course, such a being cannot "die," at least not in the traditional sense. For the Creator to have done such a thing would have resulted in the obliteration of Everything. So, its being was divided into three parts. The Oracles, scattered across Midlorr and the Realities Beyond, constitute the Mind of God, maintaining fragments of the Creator's sentience. The Mosaic constitutes the Word of God, reflecting all of the Creator's aspects and hegemony over existence and oblivion. Then there are the Seven Spheres, the Power of God...*

*The Cilidian recounts that the Spheres were scattered across the continent-realm of Drm when the saldrash ascended to the great unknown. The Cilidian and the Elven Bards claim that the saldrash used the Seven Spheres as giant "batteries" to power their majestic cities, conceive the Unholy Pools, and ultimately create humanity. Then, using The Godspell, the saldrash ascended into the Beyond, leaving the Seven Spheres on Drm. When the saldrash ascended, the Mosaic was shattered into seven parts and scattered across the continent-realm of Oriund while the Oracles burst from the ground in various places on Midlorr.*

*At least three major events in the continent-realm of Drm involved the Seven Spheres: the Demon Wars, the Dragonhold, and The Darkhold. The latter of these events, The Darkhold, was the last time all Seven Spheres were within immediate proximity to each other. The Cilidian holds that eventually, during the End of Days, the so-called Great Reckoning, a Keeper of the Seven will arise and take the Spheres and eventually unite The Godspell, ending all Creation. Many believe that the Great Reckoning is already upon the world of Midlorr and that the Keeper has already been born and is very likely pursuing her or his destiny.*

*Many contemporary scholars find much of the above history concerning the Seven Spheres suspect. Few scholars give the Cilidian much credence; fewer still pay any mind to the legends of the Elven Bards. There are many glaring inconsistencies in the Cilidian, too many to spend space recounting here, and it is well known that the Elven Bards are notoriously divergent in their legends. Indeed, a growing number of scholars doubt the legends associated with the days prior to the establishment of the Ministry, believing that The Darkhold and similar events are nothing more than mythological tales and that the Seven Spheres themselves are metaphors for the pursuit of self-knowledge. While I do not go as far as some of these scholars, I do doubt the veracity of some of the legends...*

**Xpa on The Darkhold and Seeroth the Dark:** *The Darkhold was the single most significant period surrounding the Seven Spheres. It was the first time since the Ascension of the Saldrash that the Seven Spheres would be brought together. T'Oth Maldran, now a demi-lich, was almost successful in his bid to take advantage of the power of the Spheres. He actually managed to get all Seven in his grasp during the infamous Siege of Mt. Oblivon. There, Maldran was prepared to call on the power of the Seven when he was obliterated by Seeroth the Dark. The resulting wake of energy sent at least three of the Spheres hurtling across the continent-realm. Legends insist that Seeroth actually carried three Spheres out of the Oblivon temple and delivered them to his allies who then hid them across Drm in preparation for the Reckoning.*

*This element of the history is where I must comment personally. If Seeroth the Dark was responsible for setting up events in order to cause The Darkhold as some suggestion, and if Seeroth the Dark had the opportunity to use the Seven Spheres after he obliterated T'Oth Maldran, what possibly did he hope to accomplish? Is it possible that Seeroth had access to some knowledge that guided him as so many suspect? Is it possible*

that he sees himself not as the Keeper but as a guide of some kind? Is it possible that Seeroth is stalling for time or something more tangible? Frankly, I don't know, but given what I've learned about Seeroth the Dark (his eccentricities in particular), it's likely that he had a plan all along.

Since the end of The Darkhold, there have been innumerable (most undoubtedly false) Seven Sphere sightings. But, like so many things, no one can definitively state that a Sphere has been seen in over 700 years. Like Seeroth the Dark and other personalities, magicks, and elements associated with The Darkhold, the Spheres are once again lost until such time as Fate sees fit to reveal them. Who knows, perhaps the next time will be the final time.

### **Universal Sphere Qualities**

Although each Sphere possesses unique powers and qualities, they all share a number of features. In most cases, the features of the Sphere only come into effect when the Spheres are used, reflecting the fact that the Spheres, for the most part, cannot function without the will of a sentient creature. However, it is this very aspect of the Spheres that can make them so dangerous when sentient beings of any kind confront them.

- **Divine Awakening:** The Seven Spheres are considered as existing in one of five states at any one time: concealed, revealed, fully revealed, and inactive or active. Throughout the history of humen, the Spheres have always been inactive and it is unknown how a Sphere can be activated. Powerful though these statistics appear, it is believed that these pale before the potency of an activated Sphere.

If encountered in a solitary fashion (that is, not currently being "wielded"), the Sphere will be concealed. Only those that make a successful Knowledge (The Godspell) DC 21 check will recognize the Sphere for what it is. Otherwise, it appears to be a perfect globe like a unique crystal ball or even the Dragon Orb; it reads as faint magic under a detect magic spell.

Not until the Sphere is recognized for what it is can its powers be consciously used. However, the Sphere may still "exude" its own energy to protect the "owner." In especially dangerous situations, the Sphere will randomly select the appropriate power as detailed in its description within the "owner's" character levels to the "owner's" benefit. In such cases, the Sphere does not have to be held, merely in the "owner's" immediate possession (e.g. in a backpack). In such situations, there is a 5% chance per the "owner's" character level that he will realize what is in his possession and the Sphere will be revealed.

In order to be fully revealed, a Sphere's high level power must be used. Any power that requires that the "owner" possess at least 17 character levels automatically fully reveals the Sphere and leads to the Sphere exuding its divine infection (see below).

Whatever the case, a Sphere cannot be scryed upon or tracked even by a greater power.

- **Divine Infection:** When a Sphere is first encountered in a fully revealed state, the Sphere exudes as powerful call to the divine spark in the following creature types: aberration, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, monstrous humanoid, and outsider. Only undead that were once associated with one of the types just listed can suffer from a Sphere's divine infection (while ghouls, lichs, vampires, wights and similar undead would be susceptible, a nightstalker would not). All within 70 feet of a fully revealed Sphere must succeed in a Will save DC 5 + 1 per HD. Thus, if an illithid, 20<sup>th</sup> level fighter, and astral deva encounter a Sphere, the illithid would receive a Will save DC 13, the fighter a Will save DC 25, and the astral deva a Will save DC 17. If the save is failed, the being will do all it can under its power to take possession of the Sphere. Divine infection persists for seven rounds after which the victims are allowed to make another save. Once a save is successful, a being may still do anything to take possession of the Sphere, but can control his desires for the next seven days until the Sphere is once again revealed to him. Cosmic entities and gods are subject to this power as well.
- **Divine Insolence:** The "owner" (see below) of a Sphere is considered equivalent in power to a divine rank 20 deity determining susceptibility to such a being's power. Furthermore, the "owner" may use any power granted by a Sphere against a cosmic entity or god as if he were a divine rank 20 being.

- **Divine Ownership:** A Sphere's "ownership" is determined by right of possession. Once a Sphere has been taken by a single individual, it is attuned to that individual until it has been stripped from said individual either by force or willingly.

The Sphere can be carried or worn. If it is carried, its powers cannot be used although it may still affect sentient creatures with its divine infection unless it is concealed. When carried, certain Spheres may still draw unwanted attention (see individual listings below). If a Sphere is carried in a trans-dimensional space (like a bag of holding), it is guaranteed to randomly relocate. In order to be worn, the Sphere must either be placed on the forehead between the eyes, in the palms of either hand, above the heart, on both sides of the chest, and/or over the groin. When a power is used that requires at least 17 character levels, the light surrounding the Sphere will illuminate brightly, ensuring that all within a reasonable distance will see and know the presence of the Sphere.

So long as the Sphere is attuned to a specific individual, it does not automatically cause divine infection so long as the "owner" uses a move equivalent action to control the risk of infection; the "owner" must succeed in a Will save DC 5 + 1 per HD to accomplish this. This control persists for one 21 hours. Failure indicates that divine infection functions as per normal. Unfortunately for the "owner," he never knows if the ability to withhold the risk of divine infection works until he either uses or reveals the Sphere. The attempt may be made only once during the 21 hour period.

Maintaining ownership is not a simple feat. A Sphere may be claimed by another in a variety of ways. If the previous "owner" perishes, the Sphere may simply be taken by someone else (although there is always a 10% chance that the Sphere will simply disappear upon the death of the previous "owner," moving to a random location on the same plane of existence). The Sphere may be taken by force. In such cases, the would-be robber must engage in a grapple with the "owner." If the robber wins the grapple, he and the "owner" make opposed checks based upon their best ability scores in a manner identical to the grapple except there is no size modifier. Who ever wins this second contest is counted as the new "owner."

- **Divine Touch:** The Seven Spheres can only be wielded by the creatures described in divine infection. It has been suggested that animals, constructs, elementals, magical beasts, and vermin created by cosmic entities and gods and granted true life may also attempt to use a Sphere.
- **Eternal:** The Seven Spheres are eternal. They cannot be harmed or destroyed by any means, mortal, cosmic, or divine (save for the Master Sphere). Neither can they be adversely affected by destructive magic or force. No force or magic can disrupt their forms except for the following exceptions. Invisibility, improved invisibility, or any other magic or effect that only conceals the presence of a Sphere may be used with impunity. Attempts to magically transport or move a Sphere work fine within the same plane of existence; however a Sphere so moved cannot be tracked even by the transporter (the Sphere relocates randomly). A Sphere is not susceptible to temporal effects and cannot (with the exception of the Sphere of Time and possibly the Master Sphere) be moved through time without the consent of the "owner;" an unclaimed Sphere cannot be moved through time at all.
- **Sovereignty of Seven:** All powers of an inactive Sphere are usable seven times a day unless otherwise noted. All saves against Sphere powers are equal to 17 +  $\frac{1}{2}$  the wielder's HD. Cosmic and divine beings do not use their cosmic ranks or divine ranks as modifiers for any saves against a Sphere's power.

Another heavy silence filled the room before Mortex broke it. "That's madness."

"It's impressive," Ibenez said.

"It's too much," Volstaff muttered. A bit more forcefully, he asked, "And what happens if the Seven are ever activated... If they ever unite to cast this *Godspell*? What happens then?"

Dentun answered, "The world and the Cosmos would cease to exist as we know them at the whim of the new God. It's probably happened before and it will happen again."

The reaction from the group was immediate. Some, like Korg, Mortex, and Volstaff, denounced the possibility, crying out that the gods would not stand by to allow any such thing. Others, like Marta and Daerian, wondered aloud if such a thing were possible, if all of Creation could be wiped out with a relatively simple act. But Ibenez managed to keep his wits about him.

"So, what's the point of all of this?" he asked, motioning around the room. "If the end of the world will happen, why does any of this matter?"

Dentun laughed. It was a cruel, mocking sound. Disappointment evident in his voice, the duke replied, "It matters because we decide if it matters. Really, Ibenez, you read the *Cilidian* or at least enough of it to understand that. The creation of humen was not a fluke. It was part of a plan. A plan concocted by the saldrash to ensure that, one day, the right being would come along, one prepared to assume the mantle of the Deity."

"A good person?" Korg asked.

"What is good without evil?" Dentun answered evasively. "In cosmic matters, good and evil are irrelevant before Balance. The saldrash knew that. Or at least the *Cilidian* portrays them as having known that."

"Okay," Marta said, "That's the second time you've mentioned these 'saldrash.' What are they and did I hear you right that they created humanity?"

"Yes, you heard right: they did create humanity," Dentun answered. "But, in order to understand the saldrash, we need to understand how they move in the Cosmic dance."

"So we come from these saldrash?" Daerian asked. "So, all the humen races are related..."

Dentun nodded. "Yes. Elves and dwarves; sapiens and duruban. All are related."

"Except gnomes," Marta said gleefully. "We aren't numbered among humanity."

Dentun's mysterious smirk eroded the gnome's elation. "Actually, there are many sages, myself among them, that believe that gnomes have a place among humanity. Again, we're all related and our destinies united."

Abruptly, Dentun took up the *Cilidian*. The Cleansing Fist looked at each other nervously, but no one said anything as the chief librarian looked at the enchanted cover. When he opened it, however, Ibenez gasped. He knew what it was like to open the book, to read its many, contradicting secrets. Although he could not remember well what he experienced, he knew that he had read more than just words on a page, seen more than just living pictures. Somewhere in his soul, the knowledge lurked, poised to rush back to him when he least expected it and most needed it... When he was the most susceptible to being overwhelmed by it.

Ibenez watched as the purple light flashed from the opened tome. His eyes widened as Dentun's face was bathed in the light, as his hands shook around the leather cover. Ibenez's ears rang at the sound of keys unlocking a large, metal door. He expected Dentun to close his eyes against the barrage of light before him. He expected the sage to collapse under the weight of the exposure. After all, that's what had happened to him so many days ago. He had been numb to the world for hours after his first perusal of the book.

When Dentun began reading, Ibenez's thin lips pursed and his eyes bore into the man. No, he was not angry at the duke. He was not envious. For the first time since meeting Dentun, Ibenez feared him. No one should be able to read the book without some outward sign of discomfort. Ibenez stole a look at Volstaff who in turned nodded imperceptibly. They agreed to just sit and listen and await the proper time to more thoroughly investigate their host.

Dentun mumbled, "Hmmm... Let's see... 'So it came to pass...' Yes, here it is. This is taken from the Fifth Axis, chapter one, which is one of seven different accounts of the creation of humanity by the saldrash."

**The Aulspawn:** *There are many creatures in Drm that long preceded dwarves, elves, sapiens, and the other humen races. Some were once so mighty that they controlled the entire world and challenged the power of the Saldra. These beings are known as the aulspawn as they are said, according to the Cilidian, to have sprung directly from Aul, Father of the Saldra.*

*There are vying and contradicting stories regarding how Aul created the aulspawn. One Cilidian tale states that the aulspawn were created as the guardians of Midlorr, a world he stumbled into on his journeys across the Cosmos. Another story says that the aulspawn were the result of Aul's dreams and nightmares. However, the favored story states that Aul created the aulspawn in anger and wrath. Weary of the infighting among the Saldra, Aul forced them to sign the Pact of Dominance and end their constant Clash and struggles for The Godspell. However, the greatest of the Saldra attacked their Father in retaliation for his decree. With a single strike, Aul laid his unruly children low, but not before they drew blood. This blood mixed with destroyed Saldra essence and fell to Midlorr. Out of the blood and death rose the aulspawn.*

*Whatever the origin of the aulspawn, it is clear that they are the most powerful beings in Midlorr and have had a significant impact on the history of Drm. Some sages contend that some may well have possessed cosmic power. Only the learned are familiar with the term "aulspawn," and only a few are familiar with the wide variety among their number. The best known aulspawn are certainly the dragons. However, there are other aulspawn races that, while not as mighty as dragons, far surpass the power of all but the greatest mortals. Irudyte, kran, repyn, saldrash, soulestra, and zar stand alongside dragons as the eldest children of Midlorr.*

**Dragons:** The greatest and oldest of the aulspawn. Individually, dragons are the most powerful and dangerous beings in Drm. Fortunately, they are few in number and lack any sense of racial unity. In the Cilidian, it is said that dragons gained the majority of Aul's cosmic potency; thus, they are the most holistically empowered of the races of Drm as well as the most independent. Although they once ruled Drm, their fractious ways and arrogance allowed the other aulspawn to unite against them, shattering their control. Dragons have met other defeats over the ages. The greatest of their kind, Tasler the Radiant (also known as the Dragon King) was killed by a mortal hero, Fortens the Founder. And, although they would later destroy the empire Fortens founded during the Dragonhold, the majority of dragons were annihilated near the end of the event by the Lost Emperor of Vhendimmoth, Sycolthor the Grand. It is believed that there are fewer than 100 dragons remaining in the continent-realm. However, there are some dragons so ancient that their essences are marked across the souls of humenity. They are known as the Named Ones and upon hearing the names or seeing these creatures, humens and other mortal creatures instantly know their deeds, histories, and powers. There are at least 20 Named Ones in Drm. The Named Ones, having once united to lay low Sycolthor the Grand, will come together again during the Great Reckoning.

**Irudyte:** The mysterious irudyte were incorporeal monstrosities with powerful minds and the will to dominate the world around them. They are traditionally held as the second oldest of the aulspawn races. Driven to conquest, the irudyte had the ability to wipe out another's self-will and sentience, creating entire armies of soulless, mindless slaves to do their bidding. The irudyte were defeated by the saldrash; further, the saldrash all but eliminated the entire race, finding their abilities too great. Surviving irudyte were locked away in the Lands Below or else banished to the continent-realm of Linscend. The Cilidian warns that they will return to Drm during the Great Reckoning to gain vengeance against the saldrash by slaughtering their children, humenity.

**Kran:** Great powers of the seas, the kran were once saldrash that exiled themselves from the conflicts of the other aulspawn. Utterly devoted to the oceans they claim to rule, the kran are believed to maintain huge underwater empires that rarely interact with the surface of Drm. The Cilidian states that the kran did not perceive the saldrash as foes, but will be dragged into the conflicts of the Great Reckoning.

**Repyn:** The deadly repyn were creatures of anarchy and self-will. They cared nothing for the concerns or desires of others, not even members of their own race. Among the last of the aulspawn, the repyn were the saldrash's greatest enemies due to their impressive numbers and ability to replicate themselves with the bodies of their dead or the dead of others. The Cilidian does not reveal how the repyn were defeated; however, sages and scholars believe that the repyn were so strong that they could neither be destroyed nor banished beneath the world of Midlorr. Some believe that they were cast into the Realms Beyond where they could be the problem of other beings. Although the Cilidian does not indicate whether or not the repyn will return, it is believed that at least a few have and can be found in the Chain of Burquebain where they have apparently been relatively quiet for thousands of years.

**Saldrash:** The best known of the aulspawn and the creators of the humen races, the saldrash were the wisest and most unified of Aul's children. Possessing near divine powers and attributes, they were nevertheless challenged by the other aulspawn and by factions within their race. Although all the saldrash were not good, they all believed that they were guardians of the world and that they and they alone had the right to possess The Godspell. After the Aulspawn War that overthrew the dragons, and the Saldrash War that resulted in the defeat of the remaining aulspawn races and saldrash factions, the saldrash would seek out the Seven Spheres. Traveling to Arxth Maximmoth, the highest mountain in Drm, the saldrash used the Spheres and portions of their own being to create the humen races. It is unknown how long the saldrash remained with their creations, but eventually in this prehistory, the saldrash collected the rest of The Godspell components and used them to ascend into another reality of being, leaving the world in the hands of their creations. Scattered across the Desolate South of Drm are ruins that attributed to the saldrash. To date, few have returned from these ruins and those that have either returned mad or refuse to speak of their experiences.

**Soulestra:** The most numerous and weakest of the aulspawn, the soulestra are a non-unified group of creatures that were either mutated from existed animals and beasts or else created whole-cloth from Aul's blood. The likes of aboleths, griffons, pegasi, unicorns, umber hulks, and so-forth are among the soulestra.



## Part II: The Races of Drm

**S**o it came to pass that the saldrash gathered in one accord in Arxth Maximmoth. Having defeated the zar, repyn, kran, and irudyte, and having overthrown the yolk of the dragons, and having laid low the soulestra, the saldrash ruled all the world. They drank from the seas and the sun smiled when they were pleased. And the Seven Spheres were now in their possession.

Thus, in Arxth Maximmoth the saldrash came together. They said unto each other, "We rule this world that is Midlorr. The moon does not show its faces unless we will it. The dragons hide their heads in their wings at the sight of us. We should be worshipped as gods." They looked to the animals and to the plants but these possessed no soul capable of granting true worship.

So, with the Seven Spheres, the saldrash gathered in Arxth Maximmoth and around the Lost Oracle. Each gathered parted with a portion of his spark and some of his breath. After seven days and seven nights, the saldrash were weary and pleased for in the heart of Arxth Maximmoth, in the shadow of the Lost Oracle, and with the power of the Seven Spheres, the saldrash looked upon their children. Forty-nine there were, seven for each group. The children were the chirpto, kin, elf, dwarf, hobgoblin, duruban, and sapien. The saldrash smiled and slept as their children awoke. – The Cilidian, the Fifth Axis, the First Creation of Humen.

The history of Midlorr has been driven not by the gods and cosmic entities that seek entry into the world, but by the lesser beings that worship them. Although there is a wide variety of sentient life in Midlorr, the world has always been dominated by the seven humen races. The origin of the term "humen" is unknown, but has been one that the learned of the different races have used to describe their common heritage. Just as the origins of the term are unclear, so too are the origins of the humen races.

Some may wonder why the term "humen" with an "e" is being used rather than an "a." To those native to other Mortal Coils "human" is a word reserved for a specific group of humanoids, namely the short-lived variety with a wide array of features but no true sub-types. In Midlorr, such

beings are known as "sapiens" and, for the past 9200 years, sapiens have dominated the course of the world across the continent-realm of Drm. However, if the *Cilidian* is believed, the sapien race was the last race created by the saldrash. The above quote is one of seven different humen creation stories in the Fifth Axis; it, like the others, agrees that sapiens were the last race created. Both the weakest and the strongest of the races, sapiens have contested control of Drm with their brethren. Many of the races of Drm are familiar to those from other worlds. Elves and dwarves are known by the same names, while "halfplings" are known as kin. However, Drm is host to races not found anywhere else in the known Cosmos. While one has managed to strive and be successful, the other has recently disappeared from the face of Midlorr.

However, humen are not the only races in Drm. Another humanoid race are gnomes (which some scholars insist were created by dwarven and elven intermingling). There are plenty of monstrous humanoids and giants as well. In all cases, such creatures came into being as the result of foul curses or magical accident. There are even races that have been touched by the Cosmos itself, their forms composed of elements or Ideals from Beyond. For the sake of space, only the humen races and gnomes will be covered, but it is encouraged that the wise take time to learn as much as they can about these other races from sources outside this tome.

\*(Note: Orcs do not exist in Drm; as a result, neither do half-orcs. There are rumors of half-goblins).

### Chirpto

"Never encountered these critters before, although I've heard some of their plays by sapien performers," Volstaff said.

"Chirpto are nothing more than four-legged roaches," Korg sniffed.

The *Cilidian* states that the chirpto were the first humen race created by the saldrash. According to two of the creation stories, the chirpto were intended to be like the birds of the sky, winged servants to please their masters with their aerial

acrobatics. However, the chirpto were soiled by darkness and with a lack of grounding, forcing the saldrash to create another race.

**Personality:** Chirpto are very emotional creatures, given to sudden fits of passion, sadness, and happiness; they tend to expect immediate gratification. During their lives, chirpto pour a lot of energy into expressing themselves. As a race, chirpto are dedicated to the arts. Their race is the one credited with the concept of the Theatre and the creation of many strange musical brass instruments. Chirpto tend to take huge liberties with truth and often view everything in a subjective manner. Even when performing written plays, a chirpto actor may completely change a role to suit what he or she feels is a better representation in the middle of a performance. Chirpto history is a messy amalgamation of exaggerations, myths, and outright lies and no two histories ever entirely agree.

Chirpto are curious to the point of being intrusive. Although their polises tend to be loud and chaotic, chirpto are very capable of being silent. Indeed, beyond their own settlements, chirpto rarely initiate conversation with others. They are natural-born observers and it is not unusual for chirpto to hang upside-down in trees over travelers in the wild, listening and learning. Those that spot the chirpto usually think they are being spied upon for some fell deed when in actuality the chirpto is simply sating her curiosity.

More than anything, chirpto value freedom. Individual freedom is far more important than material wealth, friends, even family or life, and millions of chirpto have died in pursuit of this freedom since the Age of Mist. Conversely, chirpto have little concept for the desires or wants of others. This has stirred internecine conflicts, as well as problems with other races, particularly dwarves. There are few established chirpto civilizations because no one chirpto finds it a simple matter to be subservient to another chirpto for any length of time. Most chirpto civilizations implode within two years of their formation. The few that have survived, like Irprethe, tend to exist in strict dictatorships in which almost complete anarchy is allowed so long as people are generally safe (and the dictator retains the most freedom).

**Physical Description:** Chirpto are tall, slender humen with large, bat-like wings in place of arms. Chirpto typically stand just less than seven feet and, although they appear much heavier, both males and females rarely weigh more than 120

pounds. They are covered in heat-storing, velvety fur that tends to range from golden browns to midnight blues or black in color. The skin beneath the fur is rubbery, coarse, and brown in color. Their eyes are relatively small and appear pupilless; in truth, the pupils are protected by reflective, yellow membranes to protect the eyes during flight. Alongside their wings, one of the most distinctive aspects of chirpto physiology is their ears, which are extremely large and wide, similar to those of the bats they so strongly resemble. Their noses are small, upturned, and typically pink. Although their teeth resemble those of other Humen, the canines are long and relatively sharp. They have large breasts plates and powerful shoulders to facilitate their flying; their arms are extremely long, allowing them tremendous reach for their size. Chirpto have three fingered, extremely long, dexterous hands: two fingers and one thumb. The remaining two fingers, the ring and small, are elongated and support the bat-like wings that sprout from chirpto's sides. Although it appears easily damaged, the wing-membrane is very leathery and strong.

Both males and females tend dress in a bare-chested manner but wear long, tight-fitted kilts and elaborate sandals. Headgear to extenuate the ears is not uncommon and females tend to have long manes of hair at the center of their heads that trail to the base of the neck.

Chirpto live as long as healthy sapiens, 65 years or so.

**Relations:** Chirpto are considered sneaky and sinister by other races. As a rule, elves and chirpto view each other with a sense of rivalry and tend not to get along for extended periods of time. Kin and chirpto interact wonderfully, the former valuing the chirpto's free spirit, the latter appreciating the kins' curiosity and wanderlust. Hobgoblins are willing to work with a few chirpto at a time. Hobgoblins are the only race that actively interacts with chirpto, having somehow found a way to get the restless creatures to commit to promises. It is said that chirpto and duruban strongly disliked each other and most sapiens find chirpto to be extremely strange, if not downright evil. Dwarves detest chirpto. The dwarves have accused the chirpto over stealing land, murder, and pillage. Burquebain has warred against hundreds of different chirpto nations over the centuries. "As honest as a chirpto," and "As true as a chirpto play," are two common Burquebainian sayings. Most chirpto hate dwarves.



**Alignment:** Chirpto are almost universally Chaotic Neutral. While they are not cruel, they are completely self-absorbed and interested in their own pleasures. They have difficulty acknowledging or even understanding the needs or wants of others. Interestingly, although chirpto have no problem attacking members of other races that get in their way, once chirpto establish a communal bond with members of their own race, they usually find ways to work together.

While there are plenty of reports of Chaotic Evil and even Neutral Evil chirpto, there are some Chaotic Good chirpto as well. True Neutral chirpto are rare, while all other alignments are unheard of.

**Religion:** Churabus, the Lady of Loss, is the chief deity of the chirpto. Unsurprisingly, she receives very little direct veneration from chirpto and clerics of the goddess tend to be loners among the race. Chirpto do not share a religious tradition, although some groups are prone to borrow traditions from other races if they find them appealing. Other gods worshipped by the chirpto are Ausarii, Mastrum, Marlon, and Ostensis.

**Languages:** Chirpto speak their own tongue, "Chirpto." All speak Dwarven as well. Those that travel abroad are likely to pick up Common and some will adopt the appropriate Elven dialect. Chirpto do not have a written language, having borrowed their alphabet in its entirety from the dwarves. However, their language is extremely complex and fluid. It is not unusual for the chirpto language to undergo minor changes every decade or so; the chirpto spoken now is extremely different from that spoken two hundred years earlier. Chirpto dialects are known for their strong regional vernacular and contextuality.

**Names:** Chirpto names are often made up on the spot and tend to have a quality related to yelling, shrieking, or some other vocalization. Chirpto names never mean anything and it is not unusual for chirpto to change their names numerous times over their lives. There is no distinction between female and male names.

Names: Craaaiik, Earss, Llaaar, Nurss, Sirrac, Urssrsk, Zyrrk

**Adventurers:** It is safe to say that most chirpto spend at least ten to fifteen years on their own upon reaching the age of 15. While most of these young chirpto do not necessarily go adventuring, many do pick up skills that make them more experienced than most other races at an early age.

Conversely, chirpto rarely continue on a particular path after time abroad and return to their people in pursuit of a variety of other interests. Chirpto that do actively adventure require routine change and adjustment or else they grow bored and are likely to abandon (although not in spite) their fellows.

**Regions:** Chirpto live in the caves of mountainous regions and tend to be drawn to cooler climates. Chirpto settlements are found across the Crown of Burquebain in which the best known polis, Irprethe, is found. There are also polises in the Chain of Burquebain. Finally, there are rumors of a highly magical chirpto city in the Bleakwood Forest called Merthles.

### Chirpto Racial Traits

- Chirpto are as graceful on the ground as they are in the air, receiving a +2 racial bonus to Dexterity.
- Chirpto possess great endurance, aiding them in flight, granting them a +2 racial bonus to Constitution.
- Chirpto are controlled by their emotions more than intellect, earning them a -2 racial penalty to Wisdom.
- Due to their unusual appearance and behavior, Chirpto suffer a -2 racial penalty to Charisma.
- Medium-sized. Chirpto receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- A chirpto's base land speed is 30 feet. Chirpto also fly at 60 feet with average maneuverability.
- All weapons, save those specifically designed for their race, are treated as exotic weapons for chirpto.
- Chirpto receive a +2 racial bonus to Listen, Perform, Spot, Survival checks.
- While flying, Chirpto receive a +2 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks.
- Chirpto possess a natural radar that grants them blind-sight.
- Chirpto gain Fly-by Attack as a bonus feat.

- Chirpto possess 60 foot darkvision.
- Chirpto are especially susceptible to sonic attacks, suffering a -2 penalty to all saves associated with sound.
- Due to their wingspan, Chirpto may not fly in enclosed spaces. Chirpto require double their reach, or 20 feet, worth of space to fly effectively. Those without this space fly at half speed and with poor maneuverability. Those with ten feet or less cannot fly at all.
- Automatic Languages: Common, Chirpto, and Dwarven.
- Favored Class: Rogue
- Level adjustment +3. Chirpto are more powerful than most races; when determining a chirpto character's effective character level, it is equal to her hit dice +3.

## Duruban

*"I've seen some duruban ruins near the Krine Hills," Mortex said with awe. "They were amazing."*

*"Believe me, kid, the world's better off without them." Marta replied.*

The sixth race of humen created by the saldrash, duruban were intended to serve at the feet of their creators. However, something amiss occurred in their creation that fouled not just their physical appearance but also darkened their souls as a race. So the saldrash would try their hand one final time with the sapien race. Once a prevalent force in Drm, not a single duruban has been seen in the continent-realm for 500 years.

**Personality:** Duruban referred to themselves as the "Duron," or the "True." Duruban were known for their extreme xenophobia and their hatred for all other sentient lives. As a race, duruban were almost schizophrenic. An individual duruban was prone to nervousness if not outright fear when confronted by others beyond his clan or race, tapping his bony fingertips together anxiously. He would avoid all physical contact and generally would not meet the eyes of others. When surrounded by their kind during encounters with other races, duruban were very arrogant and hostile, often attacking without provocation. Those few who encountered them in their own

subterranean cities found that they were extremely excitable, self-centered racists who spend a great deal of time celebrating the eventual destruction of all other races. Cities were said to be massive spectacles of religious art dedicated to the eventual ascension of the duruban race. Although duruban valued strength in numbers when interacting with the outside world, they valued their independence among each other, doing all they could to show individual superiority within a group.

While the duruban were known to war among themselves, many non-duruban found it difficult to determine distinct sub-groups or ethnicities within the race. During the few hundred years before their disappearance, the duruban had apparently given up war as the preferred means of their ascension and some groups found ways to overcome their xenophobia enough to trade and interact with other races. Males and females appeared to be roughly equal in status. Although self-centered, it was a proven fact that duruban would sacrifice their lives to save their young, even if a child was a stranger, believing that the perpetuation of the race was extremely important. Although evil, duruban did not keep non-duruban slaves unless they planned on sacrificing them to one of their gods, and they never tortured their victims, finding such activity tasteless and too bloody.

Duruban were omnivorous, but had a preference for vegetables and grains.

**Physical Description:** From a distance, it was easy to mistake a duruban from a lightly armored sapien. Like sapiens, duruban tended to stand between 5'3" and 6' in height and rarely weighed more than 190 lbs. Proportionately, they were very similar to sapiens; however, closer examination was not required for one to notice a number of significant differences. All duruban moved with an odd stiffness that reminds one of the affliction known as severe arthritis. Duruban were completely hairless and their skin stretched over their bones like dry, wrinkleless, burnished leather; the skin tended to be a rich yellow-brown, although darker colors like reddish-brown were not uncommon. Duruban muscles appeared atrophied (although their strength was not affected) and the only fat on their bodies seemed to collect in their mid-sections. The ends of their hands and feet ended in hard, horn-like growths similar to claws; these were generally filed down to the point of being useless in combat. Duruban faces betrayed no discernable emotion due to a lack of elasticity

and their eyes, over-shadowed by heavy brows, ranged in color from pale yellows to dark, murky reds. In place of noses, they had slight ridges under which were two small nostrils. Their teeth were naturally sharp and very hard, but the duruban had taken to filing them down as they did their "claws." The tops of their heads, their spinal column, and the point where their jaws connected to the skull were lined with bony, horn-like ridges. Males tended to have very long jaw-spines and chin-spines while females had long, curving horns on the tops of their heads. Both genders had taken to allowing these horns to grow and had discovered ways to shape them into elaborate designs; however, the horns were too brittle for use in combat. Due to the way their skin stretched across their bodies, joints visibly protruded and ended in spine-like protrusions; while the males let these grow to significant lengths (a foot or so) to attract mates, females filed these protrusions down.

Duruban attire was very elaborate and designed to showcase their spiny ridges. Their clothing possessed angular cuts and were usually made from leather or specially cured furs and pelts. Duruban preferred reds, oranges, and yellows to other colors. Duruban liked gloves and other hand-coverings and preferred close-toed, yet supple, shoes and boots.

Duruban had shorter lives than any other race, typically 45 years since the Age of Glory until their disappearance. In the distant past, they used to live longer, perhaps to 90 or 100. They blamed the existence of other races for their declining years.

**Relations:** Duruban hated all races. While the *Cilidian* offers a variety of explanations as to why, most scholars believe that this hate was simply inbred in the race as a whole. Still, the duruban were capable of interacting with different races to varying degrees. Duruban held a special hatred for elves, viewing them as unruly deviants. Elves returned this hatred in kind, frightened by the almost palpable force of duruban disdain. Duruban detested chirpto, dwarves, and hobgoblins in equal capacity and avoided having anything to do with them beyond limited trade arrangements and then only when absolutely necessary to their survival. Some duruban societies did work with hobgoblin and chirpto nations in the past to great effect, especially during *The Darkhold*. While duruban had no qualms about killing or harming them when they traveled through their territory, they generally left the kin alone unless

provoked. Duruban interacted with sapiens more than any other race because they suspected that they had more in common with sapiens than with the other Humen. Duruban developed a kind of grudging respect for sapiens despite their frequent wars with the greatest sapien civilizations. Of all the other humen races, duruban interacted with sapiens the most.

Of the non-humen races, duruban had a special antipathy for gnomes and routinely hunted them. Unfortunately for the duruban, gnomish magic and wit often resulted in duruban hunters getting severely injured or killed.

**Alignment:** Almost to the last, duruban were Neutral Evil. They valued personal independence but believed in the perpetuation of the race at the expense of all other races. They were paranoid to a fault and, as such, most duruban societies had strict laws regarding privacy and stricter punishments for failing to adhere to such laws. Duruban were filled with hate for other races and, earlier in their histories, this hate spread to duruban of different clans or religious affiliations. This hatred was so intense that it consumed every aspect of duruban society. While there were quite a few Chaotic Evil and Lawful Evil duruban, there were a fair number Lawful Evil duruban that played roles in "normalizing" relations with other races. If duruban of other alignments existed, they were never encountered by outsiders.

**Religion:** Duruban worshipped a pantheon of gods including the Aldra Arcanu, Malvolans, and their chief deity, Masteronus, the god of hate and fire. Since their disappearance, the only god known to still exist within the pantheon is Malvolans.

**Languages:** Duruban spoke their own tongue called "Duron." Duron was a very formal, aggressive language that nevertheless had a poetic rhythm. It was relatively easy to learn largely because there were plenty of words to describe negative attitudes and feelings with great detail and conversely few to describe happiness, pleasure, and softer concerns. Most duruban avoided dealing with other Humen and thus never learn other tongues; those that did learned Common or Hobgoblin.

**Names:** Duruban names tended to be consonant-heavy and rarely had any intrinsic meaning behind them. In fact, some would argue that duruban names were made up based upon what sounds pleasant to the parents' ear. Further-

more, since the attitude was that children are shared by a community, last names are based upon the overarching state to which the parents identify. Renowned duruban often had monikers attached to their names; oddly, it was unusual for duruban to name their children after well-regarded duruban, viewing such an act as offensive and presumptuous.

The major difference between female and male names tended to be a long or soft "a;" females usually had it while males do not.

Male Names: Budrll, Kivvd, Ooth-Voth, Sorl'S, Zurs

Female Names: Allr, Dsral, L'Ral, N'Rac, Taallk

**Adventurers:** When duruban adventured, it was almost unheard for them to do in the company of other races due to their racial xenophobia. Adventuring, for a duruban, revolved around their almost religious fervor to destroy all other races. As such, in the distant past, duruban were among the most experienced humanoid beings one could expect to encounter. Duruban of these times adventured in order to kill as many non-duruban as possible, often slaughtering entire elven and sapien hamlets and towns of possible. However, as time progressed and duruban aggression forced their allies to unite against them, duruban slowly lost this unique status. By the end of *The Darkhold*, duruban only traveled from their cities for trade. Those that traveled under mercantile pursuits were those most likely to have anything resembling an adventure.

**Regions:** Duruban tended to live in flat plain lands, although they are capable of adapting to other environments, and favored semi-subterranean lifestyles. The duruban often built about 2/5 of their cities above ground while the rest were subterranean, further distancing themselves from other races. Most duruban competed with elves and sapiens for space in the Vast and the Wynding River Valley.

#### Duruban Racial Traits

- Duruban moved in a halting, stiff fashion, suffering a -2 racial penalty to their Dexterity.
- Duruban were extremely inquisitive and philosophical, benefiting from a +2 racial bonus to their Intelligence.
- Duruban had difficulty interacting well with

other races, even if it was in their best interest to do so. That, coupled with their inability to see beyond the "black and white" of their culture, resulted in a -2 racial penalty to Wisdom.

- Duruban hated all other races with almost palpable force, suffering a -2 racial penalty to Charisma.
- Duruban possess a racial proficiency with shortbows, longbows, composite shortbows, composite longbows and any traditional ranged weapon.
- In situations in which they outnumbered their adversary hit dice by half, duruban were immune to compulsion and fear spells.
- Duruban received a +2 racial bonus to Will saves against spells or effects from the school of enchantment.
- The leathery skin of the duruban made them resistant to fire and heat-based attacks. Duruban possessed fire resistance 10.
- The leathery skin of the Duruban was resilient, granting them a +2 bonus to their natural armor.
- Duruban possessed low-light vision.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Duron.
- Favored Class: Wizard (evoker)
- Level adjustment +1. Duruban were more powerful than most races; when determining a duruban character's effective character level, it is equal to his hit dice +1.

## Dwarves

*"I don't think we need to learn any more about these stunted, bearded creatures," Mortex said.*

*"Of course you do," the dwarf said as his companions chuckled. "You learn enough from us, your kind may eventually get it right."*

Fourth of the humen races, the dwarves were created to be workers and builders. Burly and steadfast, although the fourth race were unparalleled crafters with an eye for order and design, they were taciturn and unwilling to serve their

saldrash creators...

**Personality:** Dwarves are certain to the point of arrogance, organized as to the cusp of obsessive, and so observant that they can best be described as critical. Among themselves as well as among others, dwarves are argumentative and can be down right surly. Yet, in spite of these characteristics, the dwarves of Drm have provided quite a bit of value to the continent-realm due to their dedication and overwhelming desire to see most others prosper.

Dwarves view themselves as emotionally reserved, although they are more likely to come across brusquely and seem to have tempers. In reality, dwarves have learned that they are more likely to get what they want from others by withholding their softer sides in favor of their harsher natures, bullying and intimidating others into doing what they want. To a dwarf, only the closest confidants and friends are worthy to experience the more pleasant side and even then rarely. It is for this reason that dwarves have earned reputations for being unpleasant if not downright rude. They can be bitterly critical, finding no problem in issuing or hearing the toughest comments so long as they believe such comments are made with the intent of helping another improve. If a dwarf offers a kind word, it is a rare event that non-dwarves cherish; within dwarven society, a kind word is simply considered recognition for working out all the kinks and receives little more attention than that.

In effect, dwarven critical culture has promoted the race to the forefront of Drmian society. Dwarven societies are the most advanced politically and technologically in the entire continent-realm. Due to the dwarven commitment to constant improvement and growth, dwarves have never settled and have never become satisfied as a race, believing that there is always a better, smoother way. Initially, this attitude was limited to craftsmanship and architecture, but this was simply the foundation for the burgeoning sociopolitical attitude that now dominates humenity in Drm. It is from the dwarves that modern concepts of law, social norms, music, literacy (particularly their alphabet), and the codifying of The Word were acquired. While dwarves are not the most inherently creative people, they excel in honing the natural talents of others and making them available to others. Thus, although dwarves are not as sensitive to magic as elves or even sapiens, their drive to understand the logic behind The Word would lead to them having the first wizards in Drm

(as opposed to the sorcerers of other races). While dwarves are certainly not as musically talented as others, they would find the means to define different music forms, establish notes, and develop an unparalleled myriad of musical instruments.

By virtue of their successes as a race, dwarves believe that they are superior to all other races. Their advancements are a clear reflection of a simple truth. However, this attitude is not racist for dwarves believe that all other races (save perhaps the chirpto) have the ability to ascend to their level of success with the proper guidance. Dwarven guidance is a harsh thing, though, as the stout folk do not believe in free hand outs for the shiftless and lazy. Rather, their guidance is usually perceived as offensive and curt; to the more learned, dwarven guidance is intrusive and manipulative. The latter attitude has become more and more prevalent among the dwarven elite as they have become convinced that the rest of Drm needs their guidance.

Dwarves practice very tradition laden lives. Every aspect of dwarven society is codified and stratified. Although dwarves do believe in independence and individuality, they as strongly believe that each dwarf's strengths should be committed to the greater good of dwarven society while his or her weaknesses are smothered under the weight of practice and perseverance. Dwarves believe that some sacrifice of individual liberty is essential for the greater good. The result of this complex perspective has led to a very thorough and involved set of laws and rules in dwarven society that strives to recognize individuality within the greater need of dwarven existence. There are a few areas in which dwarves are free to be themselves. All dwarves marry who they wish and it is expected that they will only marry out of love. Dwarves also raise their children within cohesive family environments, although with the expectation that the child will grow to benefit the greater community. Males and females are completely equal; indeed, there have been as many female thanes as there have been male. While to non-dwarves, there appear to be limited personal freedoms, to dwarves, their lives are better now than they ever have been while still upholding the values of their forebears.

Although they have found the means to sate their lust for gold and other precious metals and stones, dwarven society still holds such items in high regard. There are few gifts one can give a dwarf better than gold or diamonds. If there con-

tinues to be a flaw that dwarves find in themselves, it lies in their racial lust for gold. Others would argue that dwarven lust for gold, arrogance, critical natures, and manipulative tendencies count among dwarven weaknesses.

**Physical Description:** Dwarves rise to 4 ½ feet at best, with the bulk being 4 feet. While they are short, dwarves are often as heavy as sapiens, the average weight for both males and females around 180 pounds. Dwarves are muscular, though, and it is rare to see a truly fat dwarf. Dwarves have light to dark brown flesh that has a coarse, gravel-like texture; their eyes are always dark but seem to have glittering lusters. Dwarves have long hair and both genders have beards. Females long since took to trimming their beards, although most keep well-groomed sideburns and grow their head-hair long. Female dwarves love heavily arranged hairstyles and often incorporate their clothing with their hair. Males love their beards and often decorate their beards. Conversely, males keep their head-hair short and some are prone to cutting off all of their hair. In both genders, hair colors range from stark white to the deepest black.

Dwarves prefer what appears to be formal attire. Whether they go to war, meet with colleagues, or simply leave their homes, dwarves always seem dressed up. They prefer rich earth tones mixed in with violets and greens.

Dwarves are long lived, reaching maturity in their mid 40s and living until they reach their fourth century.

**Relations:** Dwarves view all other races as backwards and in dire need of saving. They also rarely take pains to hide this attitude which has darkly colored their relations. The only race that has managed to make the best of dwarven arrogance are sapiens, most of whom value dwarven enterprise. Sapiens have long since learned that their lives only get better by using dwarven technology and are willing to suffer dwarven snippishness. Dwarves view sapiens as the most capable of the races, as well as the most dangerous with or without dwarven aid; essentially, dwarves believe that if they can offer sapiens enough guidance, the youngest human race may become better for it. Dwarves perceive hobgoblins as dangerous, warmongering fools that the nevertheless respect for their strong traditional commitments. Duruban were universally detested by dwarves and the dwarves are not sad to see them gone, although they are very interested in finding out

what happened to the sixth race. Gnomes perturb dwarves; the stout folk have done little to explore how gnomes came into being, lending credence to the suggestion that the dwarves could not handle the possibility that glade folk are the descendants of dwarven/elven mating. Gnomes are treated with friendly caution as dwarves admire their ingenuity with magic. Dwarves claim to dislike kin and elves. Few things can be further from the truth. In reality, dwarves like the challenge the kin present and are fascinated by elven sensibilities and oneness with nature and magic. What frustrates dwarves with both races is their inability to impress upon them the importance of the dwarven way of life. The more intellectual among the dwarves believe that the presence of elves and the kin will ensure that dwarves never become complacent.

Dwarves hate chirpto. Chirpto are viewed as little more than vermin that have encroached on dwarven land and have mocked dwarven society. In the past, the conflicts between chirpto and dwarves were especially vicious and it has only been in recent centuries that any form of truce has been established. Dwarves are dedicated to this truce but fully expect for the chirpto to break it.

Among other races, dwarves detest goblins, giants, and most other monstrous humanoids. The source of this hatred is unclear but is plain that dwarves have long since mastered techniques to bring down giant enemies. Some believe that it is this enmity with goblinoids that has helped maintain positive relations with elves.

There are persistent rumors of dwarven sub-races. Names like dueger and derro have been found in ancient texts. To date, no one has verified that these sub-races exist and dwarves never discuss them.

**Alignment:** Dwarves are Lawful almost to a fault. In spite of their arrogance and rudeness, dwarves are more likely to be good than not. Dwarves believe that most beings have goodness in them and that they need help getting it out. There have always been plenty of Lawful Neutral dwarves, however, and these come the closest to being out and out racists. While there are smatterings of Neutral Good dwarves, other alignments are so rare as to be perceived as fantasy.

**Religion:** Dwarves worship the Masters of the Mountain, a pantheon of dwarf-like immortals.

The leader of this group is known as Barthramus. The Masters of the Mountain are the dwarven ideal made manifest. Dwarves are an extremely religious race and their commitment to the Masters of the Mountain permeates most aspects of their society.

**Languages:** Dwarves speak dwarven, although most also speak Common and Elven. Dwarves were the first race to develop a written language and all alphabets are based upon the original Dwarven alphabet.

**Names:** Dwarven naming is very complex. A dwarf is given a name at birth. Such names are usually based upon the most recent experiences of the family or an event that played a role in the conception of the child. All dwarves possess a clan name; furthermore, each also has an ancestor name. Finally, upon reaching the age of 24, all dwarves take on their true name. This true name is kept secret by dwarves and only used by and told to the closest friends and immediate family members (not necessarily one and the same). Names are rarely gender based.

Names: Blunthammer, Emperus, Flindgold, Korg, Shogun, Sterlingedge, Xrt

**Adventurers:** Most dwarven adventurers do not travel for the sake of travel. Rather, most adventurers are ordered by the state to travel and to either gather information, eliminate a group or individual, or offer assistance (asked for or not) to others. Such adventurers run the gamut in class, although the best known dwarves are fighters, paladins, or rogues.

**Regions:** Dwarves are the only truly monolithic race. All dwarves hail from the Republic of Burquebain which itself was forged by the survivors of Drm's first empire, Satrimmoth. Burquebain stretches across the Crown of Burquebain mountain range north of the Deep Sea.

**Dwarven Racial Traits:** Dwarves possess all of the dwarven racial traits listed on pages 14 and 15 of the *Player's Handbook* except as follows:

- -2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma: Dwarves possess rugged bodies and minds, but inflexible attitudes and dexterity.
- Replace the +1 attack bonus against orcs with a +1 attack bonus against kobolds.
- Favored Class: In addition to fighter,

dwarves treat paladin as a favored class.

## Elves

*Volstaff leaned back and patted his stomach. "Elves... Believe me, there no finer cooks out there. Or snugglers."*

*Daerian muttered under her breath. "How does he manage to snuggle with that gut?"*

The elves were the third race created by the saldrash. According to the most popular *Cilidian* tale concerning the elves, they were made in the image of their creators after the errors were worked out of their predecessors, the chirpto and the kin. However, so much enthusiasm was put into their creation that the energies used spun out of control. As a result, although elves are doubtless the most beautiful, graceful race, virtually immortal, in touch with The Word, and possessing of almost universally excellent insight, they were lacking in attention and commitment. Another *Cilidian* tale says that the elves were not created as one race, but as variations on the same theme, like musical notes; this is why the elves possess distinct "families."

**Personality:** Excepting a few families, elves on the whole are friendly, open people, dedicated to harmony, passion, and pleasure for all. Elves value their liberty and do not feel it necessary to develop traditions and laws that stifle the individual. Elves believe that each individual has the right to do what he or she feels so long as another is not hurt in the process (evil elves tend to believe that there are no limits in one's behaviors and tend to take pleasure in imposing their desires on others). Still, there are elven nobles. These kings and queens of elven-kind are descended from great elven heroes; they are more like well protected celebrities than anything else and it is not unusual for a royal family to simply quit and give its authority to another family. When elves do select rulers, they tend to do so based upon the wisdom and charisma of the candidates, and upon the current needs of the immediate population.

Elves are aggressively sensual. Elves value mutual pleasure; they love eating with others, dancing with others, and singing with others. They also love sex. Elven settlements have been described as eternal orgies of revelry and seduction, and this does not begin to approach the truth. Elves marry whoever wants to marry them, and most elves have multiple husbands or wives. For-

Unfortunately for elves (and, as dwarves would say, the rest of the world), elves have extremely low birth-rates. Elven women are naturally fertile once every three years from the age of 90 to 120. Twins are almost unheard of. Elven children tend to only know their mothers (there are too many potential fathers), thus lineage is matriarchal. Elven children are encouraged to explore and learn on their own and to let their hearts guide them.

Elves are imbued with magic. However, elves are not the progenitors of magic nor did they teach magic to other races (the dwarves did that). Instead, elves seem to be blessed with knowledge of the Inborn Word. There are few elven wizards as elves often find the studying of old tomes boring; most elven arcanists are either bards or sorcerers.

Elves appear to be truly immortal in terms of age. Elves do not die unless they fall ill, are killed, or will themselves to die (the *deep slumber* is one of many terms for this act). As a result, elves do not rush for anything or anyone. To an elf time is always negotiable. Surprisingly, elves have done little with their long-lives as a race and are often viewed as lazy by dwarves and hobgoblins. Elven tradition is almost exclusively oral (and often told in song); the elven alphabet is an adaptation of the dwarven alphabet (a poor imitation if one asks a dwarf). Elves do not remember actual historical events so much as they remember what was learned from said events and how the past translates into the present and may shape the future.

**Physical Description:** Elves are comprised by what most non-elves refer to as “families.” These families are large sub-groups of elves that share many similar physical and ideological traits; scholars refer to these “families” as sub-races. In spite of the fact that there are different elven families, elves do share a number of characteristics.

Elves are extremely tall and slender; average height for female and male elves is about 6’2”; males tend to weigh about 150 pounds, while females rarely exceed 120. Save for the L’Istona, Z’Ythral and the legendary D’Alicar Families, elves tend to have creamy, off-white skin with varying highlights dictated by the familial background. All have long, silk-like hair on their heads, although not even males have facial hair save for their eyebrows; aside from the L’Istona, Z’Ythral, and extinct D’Alicar, hair colors tend to be dark if not outright black for all Families with varying highlights. Elven facial features are elongated and

angular, much like that of certain felines; elven faces are extremely dynamic, changing from a dour frown to a sultry smirk in a matter of moments. Elves have long hands, fingers, and toes and often wear sandals if anything at all. All elves exude sexuality to a degree beyond that of any other human race. Elves capture what every human race values in physical perfection. Males have broad shoulders, tapered waists, and muscular – albeit slender – frames. Females have perfect hour-glass figures; although they are not considered voluptuous, elven women all have ample birthing hips and long, muscular legs. Elves of all Families seem incapable of speaking without sounding seductive.

Elven youth and sensuality does not dull with age. It is almost impossible to distinguish an old elf from a young one, the only indication being the crow’s feet (although elves call it “dove’s feet”) around the eyes and perhaps a few strands of grey in the hair.

**Relations:** Although there are certain Familial influences regarding relations with other races, as a whole elves want to get along with everyone. However, elves seem to instinctively know that duruban and hobgoblins hate them, that chirpto view them as competition, and that dwarves find them aggravating and irresponsible. While elves regard dwarves as moody, taciturn, and dull, they respect and appreciate the innate beauty of most dwarven wares and the dwarves’ dedication to building things. Generally speaking, elves find the greatest value in dwarven relationships that those with other races. Elves get along very well with kin, seeing kindred spirits in the little people. However, elves do not appreciate the fact that the kin often indulge themselves in behavior that brings harm, like theft. Elves are not sure how to feel about gnomes, as they sense something of a bizarre twist of themselves in the woodland folk. Likewise, elves are cautious around sapiens. Although elves greatly enjoy the intense pursuit of the race when it comes to pleasure and adventure, elves are troubled by sapient aggression and assertiveness. It is safe to say that elves pity all other races, but seek to make the best of their need to interact with and live among them.

**Alignment:** Excepting the D’Alicar and the Z’Ythral, elves are almost always Chaotic Good. Elves value independent liberty and freedom, but are convinced that all acts must be made for the better good. The D’Alicar and Z’Ythral tended to be Chaotic Evil, relishing the opportunity to bring woe to others in pursuit of their pleasure.



**Religion:** Elves worship the Children of the Glade, a pantheon of gods set apart from the Aldra. The Children of the Glade are led by the god Talamas, an androgynous being dedicated to pleasure and a commitment to nature. Elves consider themselves spiritual but do not make a huge fuss over religion. Elven clerics tend to be among the most attractive elves in a community; interestingly, most never marry but most have children. Elves also worship Aurlarist, Nemaria, Ausarii, and Ganlarid of the Aldra (the D'Alicar and Z'Ythral were known to worship a demon queen called Lolth and the Aldra, Ostensis).

**.Languages:** Elves speak Elven, although there are not only Family dialects, but regional dialects within various families. All forms of Elven are graceful, lyrical, and musical; however, all forms are filled with shades of nuance and subtleties that will often distinguish those that grew up with the language and those that learned it over time. Even the D'Alicar and Z'Ythral dialects were glorious to hear despite their decidedly grimmer, more sinister undertones. Elves are also prone to know other language. All elves know Dwarven, Kin, and most are familiar with Gnome (which is strikingly similar to both Dwarven and Elven). All elves speak Common.

**Names:** Interestingly, despite their disinterest in formality, elven names follow a number of rules. Each Family seems to have designated norms for names to distinguish between men and women. For example, among the K'Rystas family, male names often begin with G or Q while female names are prone to begin with an S or T. Conversely, in Sal-Talimar, many male names begin with S and many female names begin with T. Additionally, many elven names possess an apostrophe somewhere in the spelling (often after the first letter); the origin of this is unclear, but some suspect that when elves adopted the dwarven alphabet as their own, they took a liking to the appearance of the mark. Although elves rarely adhere to the practice of family name, those that do follow the mother's line.

**Adventurers:** Of all the races, only the sapiens exceed elves in their lust for travel and adventure (while kin seem to equal them). Elves greatly enjoy challenging themselves as they explore the world around them. Despite their long years, elves never bore of the wonders of Drm and seem to have an inherent understanding that there is always more to experience. As a result, elves rarely remain in one place for too long, especially among other humen. However, elves are not no-

madic like kin. All elves have homelands in the various forests of Drm and all return to these places of solace every two or three decades.

**Regions:** Elves love heavily forested areas, especially very old woods and sylvan glades. They prefer areas that are mildly enchanted (i.e. are occupied by fey creatures). Nature seems to twist itself to elven pleasures and desires while simultaneously existing in harmony. Even the D'Alicar and Z'Ythral were said to value nature, although they preferred the darker aspects. Of all the Humen races, elves are the closest to the natural world and have done the least to change or interfere with nature in spite of their immortality.

### Elven Families

Among the Families, there are modest differences; these differences are so minor in some cases that many non-elves seem incapable of distinguishing between some groups. The Families are:

- A'Grabath
- B'Ain
- D'Alicar
- K'Rystas
- L'Istona
- S'Grieyl
- T'Alimar
- Z'Ythral

**A'Grabath (Wild):** The A'Grabath elves are the heaviest and most robust of the Families. A'Grabath elves tend to be isolationists and somewhat xenophobic with regard to non-Elves; still, they will not seek to harm passers-by in their woods nor will they leave another in pain or near death. A'Grabath elves have bronze highlights in their complexions and hair, relatively thick torsos and arms, and tend to have an almost rugged look. A'Grabath wear little in the way of clothing (indeed, females do not cover their breasts) and prefer tight fitting leather garments.

**Regions:** The A'Grabath are found throughout the Wyrmspine Hills, southern portions of the Vast, the eastern most stretch of the Wyrmspine Hills, and across the eastern reaches of the Zalphan Forest. There are rumors that the A'Grabath

also live in the Golden Plains.

**Racial Abilities:** A'Grabath elves possess all of the elven racial traits listed on page 16 of the *Player's Handbook* except as follows:

- +2 Strength, -2 Intelligence: The A'Grabath find value in the strength of action rather than the indecisiveness of dwelling on things.
- Automatic Languages: Elven, Common, Dûron, Goblin, Gnome
- Favored Class: Ranger

**B'Ain (High):** The B'Ain elves are among the most affable of the Elven Families. They are incorrigible and notorious flirts. B'Ain elves possess greenish highlights to their complexions and hair. They often wear clothing that extenuates their physiques and all like green; males tend to wear tops that broaden their shoulders and reveal their arms, and females steer towards mid-riffs and form-fitting leggings. Of all the Families, B'Ain get along with the others the best.

**Regions:** The B'Ain are found throughout the Wynding River Valley, Worm's Wood, and the central parts of Zalphon Forest. There are rumors that B'Ain also live in the Golden Plains.

**Racial Abilities:** B'Ain elves possess all of the elven racial traits listed on page 16 of the *Player's Handbook* except as follows:

- -2 Constitution, +2 Charisma: B'Ain elves are rather frail, but possess strong, attractive personalities and appearances.
- Automatic Languages: Elven, Common, Dûron, Gnome
- Favored Class: Bard

**D'Alicar (Dark):** The D'Alicar elves are thought to be extinct and this is a rumor all good elves are happy to accept. Uniformly evil and corrupt, the D'Alicar ruled a tremendous empire in what is now called The Bleakwood in the Desolate South. Through some great calamity, the empire was sundered and the D'Alicar have not been seen for over 8,000 years. Legends insist that the D'Alicar were ash-white with large white eyes and dead-white hair; they were also cadaverous in a strangely erotic manner. It is said that while a large portion of the D'Alicar were matriarchal, there is plenty to suggest that this may have been only partially true. They tended to wear silver and

black clothing complete with spiked phallic symbols and vice-like feminine accoutrements.

**Regions:** If the D'Alicar persisted after the calamity that destroyed their empire, most scholars believe that they would have gone underground in the Desolate South. It is also possible that they have trapped themselves in the Lands Below.

**Racial Abilities:** D'Alicar elves possessed all of the elven racial traits listed on page 16 of the *Player's Handbook* except as follows:

- -2 Strength, -2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, +2 Charisma: D'Alicar elves were physically brittle; however, they made up for their lack of strength with incredibly powerful minds and personalities.
- Darkvision out to 120 feet. This trait replaces the traditional elven low light vision.
- Spell resistance equal to 11 + character level.
- +2 racial bonus on Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities.
- Spell-Like Abilities: The D'Alicar could use the following spell-like abilities once per day: *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*. Caster level equals the elf's character level.
- Weapon Proficiency: D'Alicar were automatically proficient with the hand crossbow, the rapier, and the short sword. This trait replaces the traditional elf's weapon proficiency.
- Automatic Languages: Common, Elven, Undercommon.
- Light Blindness: Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a daylight spell) blinds D'Alicar for one round. On subsequent rounds, they are dazzled as long as they remain in the affected area.
- Favored Class: Sorcerer
- Level Adjustment: +2

**K'Rystas (Grey):** The K'Rystas are the tallest elves, tending to reach heights just under 7 feet. Most non-elves that deal with the K'Rystas perceive them as simultaneously puerile and vapid, while other elves (even grudging Z'Ythral) hold them in high esteem. Although not precisely haughty, K'Rystas lose interest in things very

quickly as their fast minds move from one subject to another. They also possess very dry senses of rather infantile humor that is in stark contrast to their stately demeanors. K'Rystas elves have silver and platinum highlights in their hair and complexions, and favor the same colors in their clothing. Males often wear long, straight robes that reinforce their shoulders and slender waists, while women wear tighter fitting robes with little room across the chest or waist.

**Regions:** The K'Rystas are the only elven Family that still lives in one isolated area in the forests at the base of the Crown of Burquebain. Their homeland is known as the Crystal Forest.

**Racial Abilities:** K'Rystas elves possess all of the elven racial traits listed on page 16 of the *Player's Handbook* except as follows:

- -2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence: Although in possession of slight frames, K'Rystas elves possess great intellects.
- Favored Class: Wizard

**L'Istona (Wood):** The L'Istona elves are the shortest of the Families, few exceeding 6 feet. The L'Istona are often called drelves by non-Elves, an unimaginative mixture of dark and elf. Unsurprisingly, Drelves are indeed very dark colored, often achieving an almost charcoal black complexion with dark-gray highlights and white eyes. L'Istona are dour and have macabre humors; they tend to see the world as a huge farce. Unsurprisingly, they do not get along well with any other race, and are only tolerated by the other Families. However, they are not uniformly evil, although it is difficult to claim that most are of good bend. Both males and females like dark, form-fitting attire.

**Region:** L'Istona elves dominate central Zaphan Forest and there are settlements in the Vast and in the northern portions of Agrabathor Jungles.

**Racial Abilities:** L'Istona elves possess all of the elven racial traits listed on page 16 of the *Player's Handbook* except as follows:

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Wisdom: L'Istona elves are graceful and fleet of foot; however, they are not prone to self-reflection and are easily distracted (some would say "disgusted") by the world around them.
- Alignment: L'Istona elves are usually Chaotic Neutral.

- Favored Class: Rogue

**S'Grieyl (Silver):** The S'Grieyl elves were once the greatest of the Families and created the second of the Great Empires during the Age of Humen. They are mercurial and somewhat haughty, although they still exhibit a degree of frivolity. Other elves, save the L'Istona and Z'Ythral, perceive the S'Grieyl as natural leaders. S'Grieyl are very similar in appearance to their K'Rystas cousins, although they tend to have golden highlights and bright purple eyes. Likewise, they dress like K'Rystas Elves with the added tendency to bind their long hair. The S'Grieyl Empire rivaled that of Vhendimmoth for centuries until the *First Family War* between S'Grieyl and D'Alicar ripped the Empire apart. S'Grieyl fell and most of the Family perished.

**Regions:** S'Grieyl elves just barely cling to existence in smatterings of land in the Desolate South.

**Racial Abilities:** S'Grieyl elves possess all of the elven racial traits listed on page 16 of the *Player's Handbook* except as follows:

- -2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, +2 Charisma: The S'Grieyl, like most elves, are not robust. On the other hand, they possess considerable intellects and just as strong personalities.
- S'Grieyl find dealing with other races a challenge, suffering a -2 racial penalty on all Diplomacy and Gather Information checks with non-elves.
- Alignment: S'Grieyl elves tend to be Neutral Good, although there are a fair number of Lawful Good and even some Lawful Neutral.
- Favored Class: Wizard

**T'Alimar (High):** T'Alimar elves are the most abundant and prosperous of the elven Families. Descended from the S'Grieyl and B'Ain Families, the T'Alimar combine the best of both groups. They are simultaneously confident and approachable, especially when there is a significant possibility of romance. Most of the best known elves among the other races hailed from the T'Alimar. T'Alimar tend to have slightly darker complexions (almost creamy beige) and golden highlights, although silver is not uncommon. Males tend to wear clothing that enhances their buttocks, shoulders, and arms, while females prefer clothing that flatters their buttocks, waists, legs, and stomachs.

**Regions:** The T'Alimar dominate the Eternal Forest, the location of their homeland, Sal T'Alimar. They also inhabit the western most portions of the Vast and are believed to have oasis settlements in the Great Kharsis Desert.

**Racial Abilities:** T'Alimar elves possess all of the elven racial traits listed on page 16 of the *Player's Handbook* except as follows:

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, -2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma: Perhaps the most graceful of the elves and the easiest to get along with, T'Alimar elves still harbor the typical elven frailty and easily get themselves into trouble due to a lack of sound judgment (particularly when romance is in high probability).
- Favored Class: Bard or Ranger

**Z'Ythral (Dark):** The Z'Ythral elves are as feared as the Elves considered to be their ancestors, the D'Alicar. The Z'Ythral are the most slender of the Families, at least 10 pounds lighter than comparably tall counterparts among the T'Alimar. Like the L'Istona, they have dark skin, although in their case, it is a midnight blue-black; their highlights are silver and white and their eyes steer towards red or yellow-orange. The Z'Ythral wear clothing that leaves little to the imagination, but tend to cover their bodies in billowing cloaks; they prefer black attire.

**Regions:** Z'Ythral elves are consigned as a race to the Lands Below, presumably by the other elven Families during the *Second Family War*. Prior to their banishment, they dominated the northern most reaches of the Eternal Forest, lived among the Barren Peaks, and had settlements in the Agrabathor Jungles.

**Racial Abilities:** Z'Ythral elves possess all of the elven racial traits listed on page 16 of the *Player's Handbook* except as follows:

- -2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, +2 Charisma: Physically inferior to most elves, Z'Ythral are nimble and possess strong wills.
- Z'Ythral possess darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Favored Class: Rogue or Sorcerer

## Gnomes

"You know, it's not right that we're not in the Cilidian," Marta pouted.

"You're right," Mortex said, rolling his eyes. "Gnomes have done so much in Drm..."

One of the least understood and most secretive races in Drm, gnomes – despite their appearances – are not considered humen by scholars as they are not numbered among the seven humen races in the *Cilidian*. However, no one would think to list gnomes with the likes of giants, goblins, kobolds, trolls, and other vaguely humanoid creatures that have threatened humen domination of Drm. Recently, some scholars have put forth interesting theories on gnome origins.

According to Burquebainian documents detailing the aftermath of the *Destruction of the Satrimmoth Empire*, when Burquebain Cliver was leading his people from their shattered homeland through the Burquebainian Chain, a large contingency of dwarves was separated from their fellows by some kind of catastrophe (some suggest an attack by the Named One, Naseus Soulsunder). This small contingency (possibly a few thousand) was swept away by a subterranean river and were never seen again despite search efforts. Eventually, the dwarves named this group the Lost Clan and their records claim them dead. A growing number of scholars, led by Duke Dentun of the Valernus Library, are offering an alternative theory to the end result of this "lost clan." These scholars believe that those dwarves survived their separation from their kin.

Gnome sightings did not begin until well into the Age of Humen when Mandlite travelers began their emigrations south and into the Wynding River Valley, some 1000 years after the disappearance of the Lost Clan. Elven Bard's Tales citing the first appearance of small, bearded people in the Eternal Forest and Worm's Wood correspond with the approximate dates of the flight from Satrimmoth, some time in the late Age of Mist. Some of these Tales suggest that the elves intermingled with this small race, taking them to husband and wife. If this is true gnomes are the descendants of these unions. There is plenty of evidence to support this theory when one observes gnome physiology, behavior, and culture.

Like dwarves, gnomes are short, isolationists, value gold and precious stones, live within kingdoms or clans, and the males tend to favor small beards. Like elves, gnomes appear to be immortal (or else so long lived that they might as well be), tend to be slender and graceful, value freedom, possess slightly pointed ears, and enjoy living in forests and similarly wooded areas

(although the presence of hills and small mountains appear important). Of course, dwarves are aghast at the suggestion that any one of their kind would stoop so low as to mate with an elf. Elves, typically open-minded with regards to matters of sex and intriguing legends, are strangely silent about this theory. Gnomes seem enthralled by the idea, although they have not been forthcoming as to their position nor have they offered any clarity to the theory's validity. Needless to say, gnomes get along quite well with both dwarves and elves when they must but tend to prefer the solitude of their hilly forests.

Alongside the kin, gnomes comprise the smallest Humen population in Drm. As a race, they have avoided wars and adventure, and have limited their trade with others. Typically, trade with gnomes involves sapiens, elves, and hobgoblins dropping their wares at a specific location near a suspected gnome settlement during the day; the merchants leave and return the next day to find their wares gone and a payment in its place. Most gnomes encountered beyond their hills and woods are those curious enough in the rest of the world to travel from their well defended glades.

**Personality:** Drmian gnomes are best described as inquisitive, mischievous, and witty. They are also committed to the safety of their people and traditions. Gnomes see the world as a place of wonder and importance, but believe that one must find humor in everything that occurs in life. Even as they find amusement in all they do, gnomes do cling to time honored traditions associated with family and clan in order to always remember the things that worked and the challenges they overcame.

Gnomes have intentionally remained in the background of Drmian history. Gnomes find the machinations of other races and their leaders to be tedious. Gnomes are not cowards and do not fear getting involved; rather, gnomes simply have no patience for the evil of the surrounding world. Like dwarves, gnomes have cloistered themselves within fortified lands. Still, gnomes believe that they have a responsibility to the outside world and, usually as individuals, have surreptitiously lent aid to the forces of good on occasion.

Gnomes are very creative, although they are not as prone as dwarves to become involved in technological pursuits. Rather, gnomish inventiveness comes in the form of magic ingenuity. Unlike elves, who value magic for the sake of magic, gnomes prefer to push and test arcane limits.

Due to their reclusive nature, the extent of gnomish experiments has yet to be determined, but it is known that it is virtually impossible to discover gnomish glades without incredibly powerful magicks.

Magic is often the center of gnomish interaction with others. They love magical pranks, jokes, and – when protecting themselves – traps. Gnomes love testing the patience and humor of others almost as much as they do experimenting with magic. Fortunately for gnomes and their targets, gnomes are sensitive to the reactions of others and often cease their joking of they risk offending potential and current friends and allies.

**Physical Description:** Gnomes are about 3 ½ to 4 feet tall and rarely exceed 45 pounds. They tend to have beige skin, although slightly darker and lighter complexions are not uncommon. Their bright eyes encompass the cooler colors of the spectrum and their hair tends to the hotter. While male gnomes are fond of short beards (especially goatees), they rarely bother with moustaches, females wear their hair long, although pony-tails and bob-tails are prevalent. Both genders are fond of modest jewelry, especially gold. Their clothing tends to be somewhat gaudy in their color and style, with flared shoulders and flip-toed slippers. Gnomes are apparently immortal.

**Relations:** Although fond of elves, gnomes find them to be absent-minded and too sultry for their tastes. While they get along very well with dwarves, gnomes regard them as too practical and demanding. They hated duruban and would often try to kill them when encountered. Gnomes are largely unfamiliar with chirpto and hobgoblins but have an inherent distrust for both races. Gnomes get along fabulously with kin and many kin are found in gnome clans. Gnomes find sapiens to be fascinating in the same way sapiens are fascinated by dragons: they are interesting to look at but they are extremely dangerous. Most races regard gnomes as sneaking and almost legendary.

**Alignment:** Gnomes believe in peace and happiness, thus by and large they are Good. While gnomes tend to do whatever it takes to promote goodness, they tend to be limited in their application of such acts to their kind. Still, gnomes are committed to tradition. As a result gnomes tend to be Neutral in their ethical outlook with taints of Lawful.

**Religion:** Gnomes worship a small, little known

group call the Watchers in the Wood. The leader of the Watchers is known by a variety of different names although he always has the same sobriquet: Goldgleam. Goldgleam is a prankster dedicated to showing evil doers the foolishness of their ways by embarrassing them. Goldgleam peers within the Watchers in the Woods are likewise relatively light hearted about their opposition to evil. It is unclear to what degree gnomes worship the Watchers in the Woods; while most non-gnomes view these beings as gods, gnomes seem to recognize them as folk heroes and long dead gnomes that should be emulated rather than worshipped. Despite this there are gnome clerics. Gnomes are also prone to hold the Children of the Glade and the Masters of the Mountain in rather high regard. Among the Aldra, there have been gnome worshippers of Ausarii, Helias, Nemaria, and Vhanthermis.

**Language:** Gnomes speak Gnome, a language with strong similarity to Dwarven, although it sounds far more poetic than Dwarven. Most gnomes are also fluent in Dwarven, Elven, and Common. Although gnomes do have a strong oral tradition, they are versed in the Dwarven alphabet and it is believed they keep written histories.

**Names:** Gnomish names are usually lyrical, whimsical, or both. The culture behind naming is unknown to non-gnomes.

Male Names: Beereth, Garf, Harook, Mimin,

Female Names: Dami, Karmen, Loreli, Marta

**Adventurers:** Gnomes do not frequently venture from their enchanted glades and woods, preferring the safety of home. However, most gnomes are highly influenced by and interested in the arcane arts and find the means to practice their skills. There are also many gnomes interested in subterfuge and dedicated to surviving in nature environments. Thus, most gnomes encountered beyond their homes are bards, rangers, rogues, and wizards (particularly illusionists).

**Regions:** Most gnomes live in Worm's Wood and other temperate woodlands like the Swoon in the Eternal Forest, the western borders of the Barren Peaks near the Deep Sea, and the Silver Valley near distant Tetholas. These locations tend to be hidden by illusions so powerful that even the most practiced arcanist finds difficulty piercing them. Gnomes live in small clans that join together to form small kingdoms. Kingdoms rarely have more than 5000 individuals.

**Gnome Racial Traits:** Gnomes possess all of the gnome racial traits listed on page 17 of the *Player's Handbook* except as follows:

- -2 Strength, +2 Intelligence: Gnomes lack the strength of larger humen, but are extremely bright creatures.

## Hobgoblins

*Ibenex tapped his teeth with his index finger. "I've met a few hobgoblins. A long time ago. They're massive brutes. I'd hate to have to fight one."*

*"As if you know much about fighting" Daerian scoffed.*

The fifth race formed and given life by the saldrash, the hobgoblins have long been the perennial forces of evil among the humen races. If the words of the *Cilidian* are believed, hobgoblins were meant to serve as game pieces in the saldrash's military recreations of their battles against the other aulspawn. Unfortunately for the saldrash, their designs were too perfect and they swiftly found that the hobgoblins sought to use their military precision on their makers...

**Personality:** Hobgoblins are strict, regimented, and precise. They believe in honor and commitment to a cause. That cause is the perpetuation of the race and the victory of the most dedicated of their race. They are also brutal and bloodthirsty. In short, as a race, hobgoblins are dedicated to combat and strife and have difficulty seeing the world in any way other than a battlefield. To hobgoblins, life is a war and one that must be won. However, the path to combat is one that must be taken with care and respect. Indeed, every aspect of hobgoblin life must be approached in precise manners in order to ensure that no part of life is taken for granted.

War is the defining aspect of hobgoblin society. Hobgoblins live for battle and seek to spread their culture, which is clearly superior to that of others, across the entirety of Drm. The value of a hobgoblin's life is based upon the victories gained in combat. As hobgoblin culture has matured over the centuries, the idea of combat has broadened significantly; they are as likely to view arcane superiority, mercantile pursuits, and political maneuvers in the same light in which their ancestors viewed martial and military strength. Still, it is in personal combat and military campaigns in which a hobgoblin can attain the greatest degree of

honor.

Honor is the center of hobgoblins' view of the world. They believe that there are limitations in personal behavior in the pursuit of personal success and the dominion of the hobgoblin race. This attitude of honor came into being to reduce internecine strife among the race, or at least among unified tribes. Hobgoblin society is controlled by those with the greatest personal victories, who in turn determine what constitute victories and successes. As a whole, though, hobgoblins are superior to all other humen. While conflict in hobgoblin society is as often subtle as it is blatant, it is heavily constrained by clear rules of engagement. The same is true for interactions with other races. Still, hobgoblins are not (unlike dwarves) a monolithic race; there are different attitudes regarding what is honorable from one group of hobgoblins to another. Most differences between different hobgoblin societies stem from ancient disagreements based upon what is considered honorable.

Hobgoblins never do anything without careful consideration. Personal interaction between hobgoblins rarely develops for any reason beyond strategic need and tactical sense. In essence, there is no such thing as friendships among hobgoblins so much as there are alliances. From friendships to social engagements to marriage, hobgoblins do everything based upon the need to succeed. If success is not a likely result in a potential alliance, the alliance will not occur. Love and affection, while they do exist in hobgoblin society, are severely suppressed under the cause of strategic need and alliances. Interestingly, most hobgoblins have affairs and even true friendships with those for whom they have limited or no strategic alliance. While this behavior is not discussed in hobgoblin society, it is an accepted fact of life. Despite this, most hobgoblin societies frown upon polygamy. Marriages are typically arranged by the community and not just the parents. Most young hobgoblins happily accept their mates, although most have already established relationships with their true hearts' desires.

Hobgoblin children are rarely raised by their parents in the most advanced societies; rather, children are taken from their parents once the children are weaned and trained in communal environments (schools, gladiatorials, gardens, or other terms depending on the society). Children are indoctrinated from a young age on the values of hobgoblin society and their roles within said society. Children reach adulthood at 13 in most hobgoblin cultures at which point they are re-

turned to their parents whom they are expected to obey until the parents prove that they are incompetent or until the child is old enough to pair-bond (typically in their early 20's). Most conflicts in hobgoblin society arise between the young (those under 21) and the older, established hobgoblins.

There seems to be no distinction between genders within hobgoblin society; however, as males tend to be larger and stronger than females, historically males have dominated. Over the past seven hundred years as hobgoblin cultures have evolved to embrace aspects of strength beyond the physical, thus broadening the role of hobgoblin women. This transition has also expanded roles of importance in hobgoblin society. Although there continue to be relatively few hobgoblin bards, sorcerers, and wizards, there are plenty more now than even seven decades ago.

**Physical Description:** Hobgoblins are easily the heaviest and most muscular humen. Both males and females stand around 6 ½ feet tall, although males – typically 250 pounds – easily outweigh females by 75 pounds or so. Hobgoblins are covered in relatively coarse, short fur which ranges in color from dark reddish-browns to deep browns to pitch black; the flesh beneath the fur is invariably a light brown or beige. Hobgoblins have muzzle-like noses that vaguely resemble that of a great cat; they likewise have long canines that sometimes protrude from the mouth in males. Their ears and eyes are also cat-like, although the colors tend to red, yellow, and orange.

Hobgoblins usually dress in very confining attire when they're not wearing armor. Heavy leather robes, belts, girdles, corsets, and the like are typical regardless of gender as hobgoblins seek to reduce any appearance of sexuality while impressing upon each other and non-hobgoblins their physical strength. Males are fond of beards, but avoid moustaches if they allow their fangs to protrude. Females are often bald. Both genders wear limited amounts of aesthetic jewelry; when jewelry is worn, it's often ear rings or – more likely—items that have practical value: elaborate headbands to keep hair out of way, bracers rather than bracelets, etc.

**Relations:** Hobgoblins do not really get along with other races. Hobgoblins do not hate other races in the sense that durubans hated other races. Rather, hobgoblins view the different humen as how closely they resemble hobgoblins. The further this resemblance, the less value the other race possesses in forging alliances. Such



racess, possessing limited value, are thus marked for purging and/or domination by hobgoblins. There is nothing remotely personal in this attitude, although there is the belief that the more brutal the purging, the better others will learn not to stand against hobgoblins. Oddly, though, the greater the similarity, the greater the rivalry hobgoblins are likely to have for another race.

Hobgoblins find elves to be the most aggravating race in Drm. Too flighty to be useful as slaves, hobgoblins believe that elves are better off destroyed to the last. Kin are likewise worth very little, although they can be amusing when used in the proper capacity (in gladiatorial rings). Hobgoblins have a similar attitude regarding chirpto; however, hobgoblins have recognized the value in keeping chirpto around due to their animosity towards the dwarves. Hobgoblins did not particularly like duruban, finding them conniving and cowardly, unrespectable traits. Duruban, so far as the hobgoblins were concerned, were good for little else beyond grunt work. Of the humen races, hobgoblins respect sapiens and dwarves the most. Hobgoblins view sapiens as being wily and unpredictable in their reactions, but deadly when committed to a venture. This respect has ensured that hobgoblins routinely seek to challenge sapien hegemony when possible. More so than sapiens, though, dwarves hold the hobgoblins' greatest respect and enmity. Dwarves are an almost perfect mirror of hobgoblins from a moral perspective. This has led hobgoblins to feel the need to challenge the culture of dwarves at every step. Of all the races, dwarves are the most likely to be the hobgoblins' closest personal friends and greatest racial enemies.

Of the humen, hobgoblins work with humanoid and monstrous humanoid races the most. Trolls, ogres, giants, and other monsters are often found in hobgoblin territories as slaves. It is believed that the so-called goblinoid races (goblins, bugbears, and so on) are the result of ancient arcane experiments by hobgoblins to improve upon the race. Although these attempts backfired in creating a super race, hobgoblins continue to use their lesser cousins, manipulating and controlling them.

Hobgoblins have no opinion on gnomes, having interacted with them too infrequently. They likely would view them in a manner similar to that of kin.

**Alignment:** Hobgoblins tend to be Lawful Evil. Their regimented culture values the oppression of the less fortunate and the greater empowerment

of the strong. They also have no qualms about causing harm in the pursuit of their wants and enjoy achieving their desires at the expense of others.

There are a fair number of Lawful Neutral hobgoblins. These hobgoblins tend to be those who have lived among other races long enough to find value in them. There are even a smattering of Lawful Good hobgoblins, although these are almost universally those born into mixed race environments. In any event, hobgoblins are more likely to respect and accept Lawful types in their societies than any other. The selfishness of Neutral Evil hobgoblins is greatly frowned upon and such hobgoblins are often driven away by their peers. Chaos has no place in hobgoblin society.

**Religion:** Hobgoblins worship a pantheon of gods known as the Lords of the Chains. Led by a monstrous being called Arunix, the Lords of the Chain are seen as chaining hobgoblins together and leading them along a path of victory and success, whipping them into submission and perfection. Arunix himself is personified as a diabolical-looking hobgoblin of supreme strength and magical power. He grants spells from the Evil, Destruction, Law, and Trickery domains.

Among the Aldra, hobgoblins are likely to revere Dauth Alman or Lestonises. A few worship Amnar, Iycarthis, or Thore Mire. There are rumors that the wicked Lords of the Nine, particularly Bael and Belial, have strong cults in hobgoblin society.

**Languages:** Hobgoblins speak Goblin, Common, and Dwarven. Few bother with the languages of lesser humen.

**Names:** In the distant past, hobgoblin names were based upon a violent, preferably bloody act. Thus, names like Headshearer or Bloodspurt were quite common. It was not until the Age of Humen that a shift began to occur in hobgoblin culture in the development of hobgoblin names that had little to do with acts and more to do with the quality of sound and, over time, lineage. Hobgoblin first names tend to possess firm, domineering qualities; furthermore, there seems to be no gender distinction whatsoever. Last names are usually related to a shared hero or leader within a clan or society, although it is not unusual for last names to slowly evolve (although some would say "devolve") over time.

First names: Argorth, Condamnus, Lubrass, Mathborin, Sarinster, Ugran

Last names: Mathborinson, Ugrankin, Vaprablood

**Adventurers:** Generally speaking, there are three types of hobgoblin adventurers. First, there are those who serve as scouts and spies for a hobgoblin country or nation. Such hobgoblins are those best known for they are aggressive, dangerous, and utterly without compassion or mercy when it comes to completing their assignments and achieving goals. Most such hobgoblins tend to be among the fighter, rogue, and assassin classes. The second group of hobgoblin adventurers are those young hobgoblins seeking to make a name for themselves. It is in this group that most Lawful Neutral hobgoblins are found as they were not interested so much in committing to the violence of their peers but to the improvement of themselves. This group of hobgoblins are likely to be of any class, although fighters and wizards dominate. The final type of hobgoblin adventurers are “outcasts.” These hobgoblins may be of any alignment, but tend to be bards, failed fighters, rogues, and sorcerers. Such hobgoblins did not fit well into hobgoblin society for a variety of reasons and now travel the lands in pursuit of their own destinies.

**Regions:** Most hobgoblin settlements are found in the lower portions of mountains or else in rugged valleys. Hobgoblins tend to avoid wet areas (they are not known for taking baths) and prefer drier climates.

#### Hobgoblin Racial Traits

- +2 Strength, +2 Constitution
- Darkvision out to 60 feet
- +4 racial bonus on Intimidate checks
- Automatic Languages: Common, Goblin. Bonus Language: Dwarven
- Favored Class: Fighter
- Level Adjustment +1

## Kin

*Volstaff shook his head. “Kin... If there’s ever a need to watch yourself at all times, it’s around kin.”*

*“Uh, Volstaff... How do you manage to watch yourself at all times?” Mortex asked with mock seriousness. “You’re as big as Midlorr!”*

The kin were the second race crafted by the saldrash and the smallest. After the failure of the chirpto, which were too large, the *Cilidian* claims that the kin were created to be similar in demeanor but much smaller and easier to control. While the kin did end up being smaller, they were just as difficult to control as the chirpto and, even more surprisingly, seemingly immortal like their saldrash creators...

**Personality:** Of all the humen races, kin have had the least impact on Drm and this is precisely how the kin like it. Extremely adaptable, kin are creatures dedicated to secrecy and change. Kin are an entirely nomadic race, having never created a single city, much less country, since the Age of Mist. As a result of their constant moving, kin have few qualms about abandoning things and taking up new opportunities as they present themselves. Thus, kin are not prone to regret nor are they given to nostalgia or sentimentality. They recognize that life is constantly changing, a great caravan that snakes its way through the world. Indeed, to kin, boredom is akin to stability and kin require change and excitement in their lives.

Kin, like chirpto, are extremely curious. However, unlike chirpto who prefer to watch and listen, kin enjoy getting their hands dirty. Kin are tactile creatures, fond of touching, tasting, hearing, smelling, and seeing. Kin have a limited concept of ownership and often pick up things that happen to be around if it catches their attention. Once they lose interest, they are prone to break or drop items. While it would be unfair to call kin thieves or even kleptomaniacs, it would be safe to say that kin are a race bred for infiltrating and stealing. Kin seem to inherently understand that their activities will be frowned upon by others and take pains to conceal their activities and themselves. What is interesting about this is that while kin are aware of the dangers of their behavior, they find it exhilarating to risk their lives and limbs in their behaviors. Kin will enter dangerous environments just for the opportunity and will often intentionally increase their own risk to intensify the sensation of danger.

Kin are the “pack rats” of humen. In almost a backlash of their nomadic lifestyle and their need for change, all kin seem to have certain things that they collect and store. While some may like books, some may like jewelry, and another may like furs. In most cases, there are even specific aspects within these broader categories: one kin may like books on dragons while another would prefer books on calligraphy.

Their ability to leave things behind limits kin friendships. Within their own race, kin regard each other as acquaintances in most cases, colleagues at best. There are few friends in their culture as they quickly grow bored of each other. Kin believe in many associations rather than a few close friendships, believing that this will allow not only change and variety, but growth in character and understanding. There are few occasions of kin pair-bondings. While kin are very sexual creatures (although not even approaching elves in their desires), they find little value in sex beyond seeking out new experiences. Females are far more aggressive than males in this regard largely because they seek to have as many children as possible, thereby experiencing new personalities over their long lives. Surprisingly, kidnapping in kin society is prevalent and probably the greatest crime in their culture, and one guaranteed to cause violence. When kidnappings occur, it is never to harm the child, but to ensure that the kidnapper has the opportunity to engage in a new experience with a new kin. Interestingly, males are far more likely to kidnap a child than females.

Aside from kidnapping, kin have few laws which lead to strife in larger kin communities. While each kin has no qualms about lifting another's possessions, this does not mean that the previous owner does not mind. Still, kin are usually not malicious in their curiosity and need to experience and take. In most cases, kin are willing to discuss who has a greater claim or need for an item and, once this is established, all in well. It is among other races that such conversations – which make little sense to any non-kin – result in even greater distrust for kin.

By and large, kin are pleasant. They are more likely to be happy than not, even when situations would usually dictate otherwise. This demeanor, if nothing else, is the one reason that most races – despite finding them aggravating and troublesome – do not hate kin or aggressively attack them.

**Physical Description:** In recent years, some sapien groups have taken to calling kin “halfings.” Generally perceived as a derogatory term, kin have routinely played cruel pranks on those that dare to call them such in their presence. Still, it is clear as to why the term has found a growing number of users.

Most kin stand around 3 feet tall and never exceed 40 pounds, with the average weight at 30 pounds. Their skin is dusky beige, although there are kin with coloration resembling sapiens. Kin

have long, dark hair regardless of gender, and both males and females are clean-shaven. Kin often wear their hair in elaborate braids and like pins, broaches, and ribbons regardless of gender. Kin have pointed ears, although they are not proportionately as large as those of elves. All kin have relatively large, expressive eyes with a wide, seemingly limitless range of color. They also tend to have large mouths. A smiling kin may appear especially maniacal while an angry one may well seem psychotic.

Kin have perfected the ability to design flashy clothing that is simultaneously utilitarian. Although they prefer darker colors for their clothing, their attire is extremely stylish and surprisingly sturdy. Kin tailors are considered the best among any race. Capes, hoods, and gloves are very popular among kin. Body art is highly regarded in kin society – the more abstract and unusual, the better. They are not much for facial piercing, but body decorations are fairly popular.

Kin reach adulthood relatively late, generally in their early 90s. At this point, they live so long as to be immortal. Unlike elves, that will themselves to die, kin seem incapable of doing so and will live until killed through accident, disease, or intent. Suicide is common among the oldest kin and considered an honorable practice for those that have experienced all that life has to offer.

**Relations:** Of the humen races, kin are the closest to being tolerated, if not liked, by all. Even the duruban did not go out of their way to kill kin unless the little ones trespassed on their land. However, some races appreciate kin more than others. Chirpto and elves interact with the kin better than other races, with elves enjoying a slight edge in the eyes of kin. Kin view elves almost as larger cousins and respect their disdain for worry and adherence to abstract concerns like “time.” Chirpto are viewed in awe when encountered. Kin historically avoided duruban, but held no racial hatred for them; likewise, kin keep out of the way of hobgoblins, perceiving them as no fun at all. It is among the sapiens and dwarves that kin find the most amusement. Kin enjoy challenging the ideas of ownership and commitment that both dwarves and sapiens value. Indeed, kin are found in higher numbers among sapiens and dwarves than any other race due to their interest in them. Of the two, kin prefer dwarves, in that they can see through their gruff exteriors and regimented life-styles to their racial goodness. Dwarves, for their part, claim to detest kin as a race and lump them in with chirpto; in reality,

dwarves find kin to be reminders of the need to make changes to their society as needed and to never become complacent. Still, arguments between kin and dwarves are among the loudest and most amusing to witness. Sapiens tend to view kin as children... notoriously mischievous children. As a result, most sapien societies have strict laws in place to curtail kin behavior, laws that kin often go out of their way to break.

It is among gnomes that kin find their greatest allies. Kin love gnomes and more kin per capita are found in gnomish glades than anywhere else. Kin are fascinated with gnomes' ability to manipulate magic and live in peace in the same place for the majority of their lives. They also find that gnomes are incorrigible pranksters, something that kin appreciate. Other humanoid and monstrous humanoid creatures tend to view kin either in a fashion similar to duruban (ignore them, but kill them when necessary) or elves.

**Alignment:** Kin are generally Chaotic. They have limited regard for organization, tradition, or commitments and need regular change and stimulation to keep their interests. Most tend towards Neutrality in that they are not interested in harming others so much as they are interested in pleasing themselves. There are a fair number of Good kin, although these tend to be those that have been exposed to dwarven, elven, and gnomish environments for extended periods of time. Evil kin are among the most dangerous and cruel humen; they use the racial affection that other races have for them to their own ends.

**Religion:** Kin have no interest in worship and, as far as others have been able to determine, do not have a racial group of gods. The few kin that bother to worship tend to prefer Ausarii, Ganlarid, and Helias. In Ausarii, they find comfort in the mysteries she holds and the guidance she offers. With Ganlarid, they see a reflection in their youthfulness and desire to please themselves, while Helias embodies their wanderlust. It is interesting to note that few kin worship Neutral gods.

**Languages:** Kin do not speak their own language; rather, they adopt the language of whatever group they have been exposed to the longest. Over their long lives, kin pick up languages easily. All kin speak Common and three other languages.

**Names:** Kin do not hold to names at all. It is likely that most kin have numerous names, although all will typically possess one that is preferred over the rest. Kin are as likely to use the

names of other races as they are to create their own names.

**Adventurers:** Kin are natural born adventurers. It could be said that they are adventurers as a race as they all travel and explore. Unsurprisingly, kin are often rogues, although there are plenty of bards and sorcerers. Rangers and druids make up the bulk of kin adventurers. There are very few kin clerics, fighters, monks, or wizards.

**Regions:** Kin can literally be found anywhere. To quote a dwarven saying, "Kin are the rats of humenity. Or roaches if you prefer."

**Kin Racial Traits:** Kin possess all of the halfling racial traits listed on page 20 of the *Player's Handbook* except as follows:

- -2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma. Due to their small size, kin are weaker than others but far more nimble. Their limited ability to recognize the rights of others limits their understanding, but they more than make up for this with their magnetic personalities.
- Automatic Languages: Common and any three languages. Every seven levels, kin may select a new language to which they've been exposed; access to additional languages is independent of Intelligence.

## Sapiens

*"The last of the humen races," Korg said, shaking his head. "Last in every way." He hesitated, then added, "Present company, excluded. I suppose."*

*Dentun smiled as the sapien members of the Fist glared at their stout companion. "Last in the book of secrets, perhaps, but certainly not last in import in Midlorr."*

The seventh and final race created by the saldrash, sapiens are the shortest lived and the weakest. However, they were imbued with greater spirit than any other race, which quickly burns their life expectancies. In this sense, sapiens were both closest and furthest from their creators.

Sapiens are the same as humans and possess all of the qualities and racial traits detailed on pages 12 through 14 in the *Player's Handbook*.



## Part III: Classes of *The Godspell*

Korg finally took a seat. The more he listened to this Dentun, the less he trusted him. Hells, the less he liked him. Korg still did not sense any evil in the man but he had traveled long enough with the Cleansing Fist to know that just because evil was not oozing from every orifice of every adversary or threat, it was not present in some fashion. Even one with a righteous heart could engage in evil acts; he'd seen his own companions do the very same. Like Mortex; the young lad was from the Kingdom of Bainland... a deposed noble from what Korg was able to put together. Nobility in the modern world, dwarves believed, was one of the highest degrees of inequity. No one was inherently noble, and yet Mortex – by all accounts a good, if naïve and slow-witted, person – believed whole-heartedly in such nonsense. In the evil of inherent superiority. But, such had to be expected of sapiens and elves and other races that had not the support of the Masters of the Mountains, did not benefit from their guidance.

Korg watched Dentun from under his heavy brows as the man continued to prattle on. If this man was evil, and Korg was betting that he was closer to evil than to good at this point, such darkness was not latent. It would be concealed. Dentun was a man of knowledge. A man of resources.

Korg's eyes stalked the room swiftly. He had long since discovered two secret passages in the room, one directly behind the duke and the other behind Volstaff. He was certain there were more secrets in the room. The intelligence from the Aurdomarc said that the Library was built by a famous wizard. Seeroth the Dark. There was no telling how many other secrets this place held... What this Dentun was able to discover. Such was the nature of wizards and their Word. Everything concealed, nothing as it appeared. He had learned as much from watching Ibenez. Shifty Ibenez. Quiet, but always thinking and scheming when he was not studying. His slender form belied great power in the Word. Korg wondered what Ibenez made of the duke. He noticed how he reacted when Dentun started reading from the *Cilidian*. Although he understood Ibenez the least of his fellows, Korg did respect his strength of observation. If things went sour, he suspected that Ibenez had a few Words ready.

Korg turned his attention to Marta. Her kind was little different from wizards. Skulking in the shadows and looking for weak links from behind. No honor in that. Yet, even in Burquebain, there were those that valued such behavior... even in the Aurdomarc. Still, she had her uses when she was not arguing with Volstaff or Mortex. He suspected that she had already determined the best

**Alignment in the Godspell:** The Godspell supports the nine cardinal alignments presented on pages 103 through 106 in the Player's Handbook. However, The Godspell functions as a somewhat more complex environment in which human motivations and ignorance can color alignment.

It is generally safe to assume that true Evil (with a capital "e") in The Godspell will be encountered in fiends, certain aberrations, undead and most of the non-mortal monsters described in the Monster Manual or this text; likewise one should expect vileness and cruelty in prestige classes like the assassin, bloodletter, or blackguard. The desire and will to harm – whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually – others for nothing more than personal gain or satisfaction is always evil in The Godspell. That being said, there are occasions in which alignment may not entirely match motivations or even actions among the Good and Neutral alignments. When mortal failings and limitations are considered, there will and should be greater flexibility and even contradiction where alignment is concerned. There will often be disagreements between those of identical alignments as their attitudes and ideas are colored by racial identity, regional history, and personal experiences.

One example of this is how dwarves perceive chirpto. Dwarves are often Lawful Good in Drm; however, due to racial and regional history, dwarves detest chirpto, seeing them as little more than sentient vermin. Dwarves advocate something that appears dangerously close to genocide to other races where chirpto are concerned. Still, the dwarves worship good-aligned gods and believe firmly in the responsibility of the strong to defend and sacrifice for the weak. Another example lies with the Ministry (described in Part V). The god of the Ministry, Celzar, is Lawful Good; yet many would argue that the methodologies of some Ministry officials seem far darker than what Celzarian dogma advocates. How a DM reconciles these apparent diverging attitudes will greatly affect a Godspell game.

In the end, alignment will generally hold true but not always as clearly as some may have grown accustomed to in other games. The handling of alignment in this manner will enhance the intrigue-filled nature of The Godspell.

means to escape if things went wrong and could disable the traps that would undoubtedly threaten their retreat.

If there was a fight, Mortex was near the door. Good, he could lead the others out while Korg covered the exit. The lad could be foolish, but was very talented with a sword. In addition to piecing together that the boy was some sort of deposed noble highly trained in sword play, Korg also knew that he had some skill in the wild. It would make sense from what he knew of Bainland; the place was supposedly a huge forest. In the group's most recent excursion, they had been lost in Worm's Wood right before they found the resting place of the *Cilidian*; Mortex got them out. And then they faced those undead things, those ad-raeden. The boy chopped them up well and stood his ground. He and Daerian.

Korg's eyes flicked to the tall, muscular woman standing behind Ibenez. While she didn't have nearly the skill possessed by Mortex (not to mention himself), she could fly into such a rage that her lack of skill did not matter. And he could not recall how many times she had laughed at injuries that would have made him hiss in pain. She was incredibly fast. When that thing (he thought, and Volstaff confirmed, that it was some manner of dream spirit) rushed towards Ibenez, she got between him and it so fast even Korg was impressed. Korg tapped the haft of his axe as he grudgingly admitted that she and Mortex were satisfactory fighters.

Even Volstaff was useful in combat from time-to-time. When he was not drinking. Or spinning tales. And to think he was a servant of a goddess. Korg studied the incredibly fat man, who was in turn studying Dentun. Korg's observation was brief for he knew that Volstaff was not as slovenly or rarely as drunk as he seemed and possessed satisfactory powers of observation. Still, Korg felt that his fat ally's behavior was not proper for one who served a goddess such as Nemaria. From what he knew of Nemaria, she sought potential and light. Korg suspected that she saw little potential in ale and beer. Nevertheless, Volstaff had been useful on more than a few occasions. Korg had long since – albeit reluctantly – accepted that the man's faith in his goddess was absolute and had seen her rain blessings upon the entire group. While she was no Barthramus, she was a goddess worthy of respect. Or at least, Korg thought her a goddess; according to Volstaff and Ibenez, who both are citizens of Valdeze, one of the countries part of the Ministry, Nemaria is some kind of divine servant of the only true god, Celzar. Whatever she was, she was worthy of recognition.

Korg turned his attention back to Dentun. If they needed to, the dwarf was certain that all the right components were in place among his companions to take this man down whatever little tricks he brought to the fore. Korg did not trust him. He did not like him. And he was certain that this Dentun was more than just some librarian-sage...

**Core Classes in The Godspell:** *The legends of Drm are replete with the heroic and villainous acts of numerous mythological figures. From Arien the Shadow and his successful purloining of the Sphere of Power from Bainland to Zyxrxzy the Ebon Rage and his unnatural acts of destruction and perversion, the villainous and unscrupulous have never traveled too far without drawing the attention of those dedicated to justice or good. For every Arien, there was a holy knight like Xisten Ironledge, who faced down the terrifying gaze of The Blackiron. For every Zyxrxzy, there was a Silverwood Vine who traveled the continent-realm seeking to free unfortunates from the bonds of tyranny. In every case, the most notable figures of Drmian history gained their fame by practice, study, or the blessings of the gods.*

*The core classes as detailed for the Lands Under the Crown of Drm are essentially identical to the classes presented in Chapter 3 in the Player's Handbook. There is one notable difference. The Godspell uses the sorcerer variant provided in Dicefreaks' The Gates of Hell.*

### **Barbarians**

Across most of Drm, those who are identified as "barbarians" are viewed with a mixture of contempt and fear. Often uneducated and unaware of the benefits of modern technology, hygiene, or niceties, the barbarian is typically perceived as the ultimate brute. While it is true that barbarians tend to live in the most remote or dangerous environments and often eschew the perceived benefits of modernity, they are not necessarily witless brutes anymore than they represent a homogenous group.

Most barbarians are dedicated to a family-group or tribe, doing their best to ensure that their loved ones and friends benefit from their rugged strength and uncanny ability to survive in the worst environments.



Whether the conditions are the blisteringly cold of the Froden Norv, the unforgiving and treacherous plains of Vast Expanse, or arid and almost inhospitable Desolate South, barbarians seem to fight against the very world, stubbornly living and pushing on when lesser people would have faltered and perished. Barbarians tend to view “civilization” as a crutch for the weak or as needlessly elaborate and useless. All value their personal liberty and chafe under anything that seems to impede their freedoms.

In Drm, the majority of barbarians hail from the Froden Norv, the Barren Peaks, the Vast Expanse, Agrabathor Jungles, the Great Kharsis Desert, and the Desolate South. Sapiens dominate the class, while chirpto are close behind. There are few elven barbarians, though the most likely Elven Family to adopt the class is the A'Grabath from Wyrmspine Hills. Recorded history does not indicate barbarians from the other humen races but this does not mean they do not exist. There are many barbarians among the various monstrous humanoid and giant races.

### **Bards**

It is difficult to know if one is dealing with a bard at first glance. In Drm, not all great storytellers are bards; neither do all bards excel at singing. However, more than any other class, the bards of Drm exemplify an uncanny knowledge of a variety of things, from seemingly trivial knowledge about the threat of shaking hands with a man with hair on his palms to how to find great wealth in the Noon Woods.

Drmian bards utilize magic in a manner very different from other arcane spellcasters. Their ability to manipulate The Word is tied directly to their ability to manipulate sound, whether from their vocal cords, the peel of a horn, or the sweet vibrations of a heartflutter.

Bards can be of virtually any race, although dwarven bards are very rare. Chirpto bards are very well known, as are elven and half-elven bards. Indeed, bards are responsible for the oral traditions of both races. Kin maintain a healthy bardic tradition, useful in maintaining racial and cultural identity as they travel across the continent-realm. Still, sapien bards tend to best capture what is expected of this eclectic class, the desire to spin fanciful tales with a clever tongue while strumming a lute in the middle of a comfortable, crowded inn.

### **Cleric**

In Drm, where the prophecies of a holy book and the threat of the *End of Days* are very real, many firmly believe in the power of Realities Beyond ruled by nearly omnipotent beings. Whether these beings are the Aldra, the true gods of Drm, interloper gods, or cosmic entities of impressive puissance, most invite and often accept the placations of lesser creatures. Many beings in Drm worship a specific god or cosmic entity; some even worship an entire pantheon. The gods and cosmic entities, while appreciative of the attention they receive from many mortals, seek permanent ambassadors in Drm to carry their message and reflect their interests... and to prepare for the *Great Reckoning*. It is through clerics that gods spread their will and their wrath.

Clerics play many roles in society. In the Ministry, for example, sainted ministers wield tremendous political and social influence, while in the various elven homelands, clerics are respected but not nearly as influential as many would expect.

Most clerics in Drm worship a god from the Aldra pantheon; however quite a few clerics, particularly dwarves, elves, and hobgoblins, find comfort in extended pantheons of beings not thought to be native to Drm. Monstrous humanoids, giants, and other sentient beings worship gods and powers also not native to Drm. Finally, there have always been those mortals who have been drawn to beings not thought of traditionally as “gods.” Whether the tyrannical Lords of the Nine Hells or the liberty-offering Defenders of Freedom, quite a few clerics serve the cause of those representing Ideals and concepts.

Clerics of different gods possess different titles; few would respond to the term “cleric.” Clerics tend to refer to themselves and clerics of other gods or cosmic entities as “Child of” such and such.

### **Druids**

The druids of Dm are simply another kind of cleric. Some gods, like Aurlarist, do not have clerics at all, just druids. Although most people tend to perceive druids as wanderers in the woods and forests of the world, many are found in the savannahs of the Golden Plains or among the peaks of the Crown of Burquebain. They are as likely to vie against each other as they fight against those whom they perceive as threats to the natural order. Many less civilized societies tend to have druids as their spiritual leaders rather than clerics.

Many druids are dedicated to different aspects of Nature. The better known druids seek a balance between Nature and Humanity, doing what they can do ensure that mortals never entirely abandon the world that spawned them. Others seek to make Nature benefit man, believing that this will ensure the continuation of the Natural order within a new paradigm. Still others, usually those associated with death and destruction, seek to create a new kind of Nature, one where Humans are slaughtered and the woods become fed by mortal blood.

The following Aldra have druidic branches: Aurlarist, Brumbd, Ganlarid, Havas, Mastrum, Minarthris, Ostensis, and Stakarth. Aurlarist only grant spells to druids and has no clerics.

### **Fighters**

Fighters are among the best known of the various classes of Dm. Many are drawn to the path of the fighter because of all the classes it is the most direct and often the most accessible. One does not have to worry about studying ancient tomes for days on end to wield a sword, nor does one have to prostrate himself before a god to loose an arrow. Strength, training, a good weapon, and well-kept armor are often the only requisites for a fighter. Many of the greatest figures in history, from Zalphan the Bard to Silverwood Vine, were fighters known as much for their skill with martial weapons as they are known for their personalities and daring.

Fighters can be found in every walk of life in Dm. Many rulers are trained as fighters by fighters and many trading costers value the strong arms of such warriors as they travel over long distances. Indeed, of all the classes, fighters seem to be more in touch with the day-to-day concerns of most common folk, making them more understandable and intriguing to the masses than even a cleric or rogue.

Fighters are present in virtually every civilized culture in Dm; there are even fighters among the more remote locations and within the populations of monstrous humanoids and giants.

### **Monks**

There are few large aesthetic orders scattered across Dm, most of them present in the most civilized locations near the Deep Sea, particularly Ashtur, Asnan, and Tysunis. From the first Order, known as Debna's Hands in Asnan, to the pyromaniac Flames of Hate, monks are highly respected for their regimentation, dedication, and ability to push the body to abilities perceived as impossible by most.

Monks are extremely common on the outskirts of large, civilized areas. Although not practitioners of the arcane, monks do manipulate The Word to a degree, making them deadly in combat. As a result, monks tend to be relatively well read and very thoughtful, although the nature of the training typically forestalls arrogance. Monks have little interest in the trappings of advanced society, so while they live near large cities they often do not consider themselves part of any nation save their own brotherhood.

Monks are one of the few classes (alongside rogues) that tend to come together in large groups. It is extremely rare to find a completely solitary monk in Dm.

While sapiens, hobgoblins, and dwarves are known for having large, prosperous aesthetic orders, other races rarely produce monks. Indeed, there are no known chirpto, elven, or gnomish monk orders.

As a group, monks do not suffer from the same multi-class limitations described in the *Player's Handbook*, although certain aesthetic orders may impose their own restrictions.

### **Paladins**

Holy knights and their exploits are told as stories featuring valor and bravery to people throughout Dm. The likes of Lan Carlsonian, hero of the *Righteous Wars of Vhendimmoth*, and Xisten Ironledge, one of legendary Heroes of Noon, stand as among the staunchest foes to chaos and evil in the continent-realm. Even in remote places cloaked under the shroud of villainy, it is not unusual to encounter a paladin.

In Dm, all paladins are Lawful Good. Paladins typically hold Barthramus, Celzar, Faeynas, or Vhanthermis as their patron. In the few areas in which the Virtues of Heaven have a cultic presence, there are also paladins dedicated to the entire celestial group. To date, paladins have not been known to serve any other gods.

Dmian paladins do not suffer the same multi-class limitations described in the *Player's Handbook*; paladins may freely multi-class with Lawful Good fighters, Lawful Good monks, or as a Lawful Good cleric of Barthramus, Celzar, Faeynas, or Vhanthermis.

### **Rangers**

The hunters in wild frontiers, defenders of the mountain pass, and despoilers of civilization, rangers in Dm may be any one of these things and more. Rangers are found throughout the many different unsettled ecosystems of Dm, from the sprawling dark forest of Worm's Wood to the thin air of the Ash Peaks to the Golden Plains of Vhendimmoth.

Rangers of Dm are renown for their vastly different attitudes, perhaps more so than most other classes. While some are clearly interested in the relationship of Humenity and nature, others are dedicated trackers or hunters. Some act as crusaders for certain nature gods, while others have developed skills to manipulate Nature to their own needs. Some are associated with a specific church, while others are in the employ of a government or retainers to a noble.

The gods likeliest to draw rangers are Aurlarist, Ausarii, Brumbd, Churarbus, Ganlarid, Havas, Helias, Lestonises, Minarthris, Nemaria, Pyaras, Ostensis, and Stakarh.

### **Rogue**

Probably the most wide-spread class in Dm, rogues run the gamut with regards to attitudes, goals, and interests. When most people think about a rogue, they tend to imagine a skulking miscreant in the night attempting to steal jewels, and while there are many rogues that fulfill (and aspire to achieve) such reputations, there are many more rogues who dedicate their time to acts of diplomacy, investigation, and theatrics.

In the Common Era, most rogues are from at least moderately large towns and if they are not, they are often drawn to such places as their talents are often frowned upon in smaller communities. Indeed, the only places where "rogues" seem highly concentrated in small communities are among the kin.

A number of large groups of rogues dedicated to thievery and related acts (slave-trade, extortion, drug-trafficking, etc.) have created so-called thieves' guilds in the larger cities of Dm. In most locations, these guilds tend to exist within a complex social arrangement with established rulers and law-enforcement agencies, although in some places, thieves' guilds work in tandem with rulers or control the rulers themselves. The better known guilds include the Grey Few, The Merchants of Kharsis, The Rose Guild, and Raiders of Worm's Wood.

### **Sorcerer**

Sorcerers are among the most misunderstood class in Dm. To most, even adventurers, there is no difference between a sorcerer and a wizard. Both manipulate the source of all Ideals, The Word, to their own ends and both tend to be "bizarre" by traditional standards within any culture. But, both sorcerers and wizards view each other differently, although only rarely with any degree of group-wide competition.

Sorcerers, also known as Wielders of the Inborn Word, have a natural affinity for manipulating The Word, never requiring the research and study typical of the wizard. As a result, most sorcerers live in the less civilized locations of Dm alongside barbarians (although they tend to hide their powers for a long time). In more advanced lands like the magocracies of Ashtur and Xyl, those who are identified as having sorcerous powers

at a young age are typically trained in such a manner that they become wizards rather than sorcerers; in other advanced societies like some Ministry lands sorcerers are hunted down and sometimes killed as their powers are perceived as demonic. Even more than wizards, sorcerers are likely to scoff at the notion of gods and the need for clerics, viewing themselves as the natural progression to the level of power wielded by so-called “gods.”

Sorcerers are most prevalent among the chirpto, elven, and kin races. The chirpto have few centers of knowledge, limiting their access to the study necessary to produce wizards. Furthermore, they bore easily as a race. Elves, being naturally gifted with and drawn to magic have some of the greatest sorcerers in history. The kin also have quite a few sorcerers among them, although this is largely due to the lack of any real interest in research and study among the little people. A point of frequent confusion lies with the Sorcerers of Satrimmoth. These 12 dwarves of myth were not sorcerers, but wizards.

### **Wizards**

To many, wizards are the most powerful mortals in Drm. Indeed, many of the luminary figures in Drmian history and myth were wizards or at least had training in The Word. From the nigh invincible Mammun the Maker and the demagogue T’Oth Maldran, to the benevolent Crin the Sacred and the infamous Seeroth the Dark, wizards have always been at the forefront of many of the greatest achievements and calamities in Drm.

Wizards in Drm are practitioners of The Word. Due to the amount of study they accomplish in order to use The Word, wizards tend to know a great deal about the reality that the Ideal creates. As a result, not only do many wizards feel that they know what the ideal world should be, many also believe that only their particular brand of Ideal is accurate. It should come to no surprise that many wizards are arrogant and agnostic, if not outright non-believers. This arrogance has largely reduced the number of large cabals in Drm. It is this arrogance that some believe has led to the disrepute of The Word in the lands of the Ministry, where practicing The Word is considered an act of blasphemy punishable by death. Still, there are a number of powerful wizard groups in Drm including the Wizards of the Crystal in the Great Kharsis Desert, The Ash of Ashtur, the Magistrates and Savants of Xyl, and the Crin’s Sacred.

### **Other Classes**

There are other classes in Drm, although most of these are not prevalent enough to mention in detail here. Rumors of witches, warlocks, scouts, and similar classes continue to flutter across the continent-realm and some Seekers have claimed to have encountered unique practitioners. These claims have yet to be verified.

While Korg was musing, Marta had propped her head on her right hand. “So, okay, we know all about the races of Midlorr. I still don’t see what the big deal is.”

“The big deal,” Dentun replied, “is that the races of Midlorr are destined for great things. We have inherited this planet for a purpose.” Dentun glanced back down at the book, his eyes turning black, Marta assumed, in the glare of the light emanating from the pages. “I and other scholars believe that this book holds the clues to discovering this purpose.”

Marta opened her mouth with a snappish retort, but Ibenez spoke first. “I had read recently that others have long since tried to uncover these mysteries.” His voice was thick with incredulity. “Others with greater resources than you, much less us. Seeroth the Dark was an Imperial Sentinel and legends say that not even he was suc-

cessful. How could you or any other scholar assume you would have greater luck?”

Marta observed Dentun’s face for any sign of offense at Ibenez’s words and was disappointed to see regret.

“Alas,” the duke said shaking his head, “No, not even Seeroth could uncover all of the secrets in the *Cilidian*.” He paused as if to consider his words, another of his strange smiles appearing. “Well, not this secret anyway. No Sentinel, no Magistrate of Xyl. Not even the Darkling, the secret guards and police of Ashtur’s rulers, have discovered anything.” He laughed in clear amusement. “Did you know that the Ash, the Darklings’ masters, once had them review all the scrolls, parchments, and books in the Black Hall Library hoping to find clues in the ancient writings? I even heard that they worked with the Merchants of Kharsis at one point to steal books from this

library.”

Mortex said, “Sounds to me that a lot of people out there are spending a lot of time doing more than just studying day-to-day affairs if they’re so worried about what’s in this book.”

“Indeed,” Dentun agreed. “There are many organizations out there with specially trained people to do their bidding.”

### ***Prestige Classes of The Godspell***

*Drm is host to many public organizations and clandestine groups. These entities often train their members in unique or secret lore and methods, enhancing their chance for success in their goals. As a result, there are many prestige classes in Drm. Below are a just a few examples.*

## **Black Adder of Wrath**

Worshippers of Bythal Dalax take no offense, intentional or otherwise, lightly. In most cases, the offended Dalaxan can deal with the situation on her own, but on occasion the offender may be a person of importance or even another Dalaxan. In such cases, the Dalaxan will call on a black adder of wrath.

Both the crusaders and defenders of the Dalaxan faith, black adders of wrath are deadly.

Dedicated wholly to the concept of revenge and wrath, black adders have honed their skills to emulate the totem animal of their paranoid goddess and kill with as much efficiency. Most black adders of wrath spend their time protecting high-ranking clerics of Bythal Dalax while others hire their services out to those who can prove how badly they were wronged by the selected victim. Still other black adders are themselves victims of some past slight and, after spending years in training, contemplation, and prayer to their goddess, embark on quests to assassinate their enemies.

Most black adders of wrath rise from the ranks of warriors who fight with their hands. Monks are the favored class for most black adders, but a very large number of rogues also have the skills to become black adders. Fighters and fallen paladins are not unusual, but the lifestyle necessary to become a black adder does not often draw rangers. Other classes find it difficult to achieve the dedication required of the black adder prestige class.

**Hit Dice:** d4

### **Requirements**

To qualify to become a black adder of wrath, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil or Lawful Neutral

**Base Attack Bonus:** +5

**Feats:** Deflect Arrows, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike

**Skills:** Hide 10 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 2

**Table 3 – 1: The Black Adder of Wrath**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Serpent’s Fangs 1d10, Sneak Attack +1d6
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Bythal’s Blessing, Serpent’s Tongue
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Serpent’s Slither +10 ft
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Serpent’s Fangs 1d12, Envenomed Attack
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Serpent’s Grace +1, Sneak Attack +2d6
6th	+6	+2	+5	+2	Serpent’s Stare, Serpent’s Slither +20 ft.
7th	+7	+2	+5	+2	Serpent’s Mind
8th	+8	+2	+6	+2	Serpent’s Fangs 1d20, Death Attack
9th	+9	+3	+6	+3	Serpent’s Slither +30 ft
10th	+10	+3	+7	+3	Serpent’s Grace +2, Serpent’s Mind, Sneak Attack +3d6

ranks, Move Silently 10 ranks

**Special:** A black adder of wrath must be an ardent worshipper of Bythal Dalax, the Divine Wrath.

**Class Skills:** Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (religion), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Pick Pocket (Dex), Search (Int), Slight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex), Use Rope (Dex). See Chapter 4: Skills in the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the black adder of wrath prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** The black adder of wrath is proficient with darts, bows of all kind, daggers, and the sap. The black adder of wrath possesses no proficiency with armor.

**Serpent's Fangs:** A black adder of wrath's unarmed strikes are deadly; the damage caused increases as she grows more experienced. If the black adder already possesses improved unarmed damage (as that granted by monk levels), her unarmed strike damage progresses, treating her black adder levels as monk levels for this purpose.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** If a black adder can catch an opponent when he is unable to defend himself effectively from her attack, she can strike a vital spot for extra damage. Basically, any time the black adder's target would be denied his Dexterity bonus to AC (whether he actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the black adder flanks the target, the black adder's attack deals extra damage. The extra damage is +1d6 at 1<sup>st</sup> level and an additional +1d6 at fifth level. Should the black adder score a critical hit with a sneak attack, the extra damage is not multiplied.

Ranged attacks can only count as sneak attacks if the target is within 30 feet. The black adder can't strike with deadly accuracy from beyond that range.

A black adder can only sneak attack a living creature with a discernable anatomy – undead, constructs, oozes, plants, and incorporeal creatures lack vital areas to attack. Any creature that is immune to critical hits is also not vulnerable to sneak attacks. The black adder must be able to

see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach a vital spot. The black adder cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

If the black adder gets a sneak attack bonus from another source (such as through rogue levels), the bonuses to damage stack.

**Bythal's Blessing (Ex):** As befitting her dedication to the goddess of serpents, the black adder of wrath is immune to poisons and venoms of all sorts.

**Serpent's Tongue (Ex):** The black adder "smells" with her tongue in a manner similar to that of serpents. The black adder gains the scent ability and receives a +10 circumstance bonuses to Survival when tracking by smell.

**Serpent's Slither (Ex):** The black adder not only moves quietly, but swiftly. The black adder gains a +5 bonus to Move Silently attempts regardless of her speed. While unarmored and/or with a light load, the black adder also receives the enhanced speed to her base as listed above; if the black adder already has improved speed (like that of a monk), she selects which ever is better.

**Envenomed Attack (Su):** Drawing on the venomous spite of Bythal Dalax, a black adder can make an envenomed attack 1/day every four levels. When the black adder makes a successful unarmed attack, she releases a potent venom into the victim's body. The victim receives a Fortitude save DC equal to 10 + the black adder's class level + the black adder's Constitution modifier; the initial damage is 1d4 Constitution and the secondary damage is also 1d4 Constitution damage. A black adder must declare the intent to commit to an envenomed attack before she makes an attack, although the black adder may use the envenomed attack with sneak attacks or death attacks.

**Serpent's Grace (Ex):** When unarmored, the black adder receives the AC bonus detailed above. This bonus stacks with any bonus she previously received (as a monk, for example). Furthermore, the black adder applies Dexterity and Wisdom bonuses to AC if unarmored; this boon does not stack with similar bonuses like that provided by the monk class. Finally, the black adder acquires the evasion ability at 5<sup>th</sup> level; if she already possesses evasion, she gains improved evasion instead. In either case, the black adder must be

lightly armored and/or with a light load in order to benefit from evasion.

**Serpent's Stare (Ex):** The black adder emulates the legendary hypnotic powers of the serpent. Once per day at 6<sup>th</sup> level, the black adder can attempt to cause *slowness* to one target within 30 feet as a standard action with gaze attack as a caster equal to her class level. The Will DC save is equal to 10 + the black adder's class level + the black adder's Charisma modifier. The black adder may attempt an additional Serpent's Stare every six levels after 6<sup>th</sup> level.

**Serpent's Mind (Ex):** The black adder, like reptiles, seems to have an almost alien mind. As a result, she is highly resistant to all spells from the schools of Enchantment or Illusion, receiving a +4 bonus on such saves.

**Death Attack (Ex):** If the black adder studies her victim for 3 rounds and then makes an unarmed sneak attack and successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly killing the target. While studying the victim, the black adder can undertake other actions so long as her attention stays focused on the target. Unlike the traditional assassin's death attack, the black adder can observe as a move equivalent action, thus allowing her to attack a victim even if he's aware of the threat she represents. If the victim of such an attack fails his Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + the black adder's class level + the black adder's Intelligence modifier) he dies. Once the black adder has completed the 3 rounds of study, she must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds. If a death attack is attempted and fails (the victim makes his save) or if the black adder does not launch the attack within 3 rounds of completing the study, 3 new rounds of study are required she can attempt another death attack.

**Epic Progression:** In addition to progressions described above, the black adder of wrath receives additional benefits as she progresses into epic levels. The black adder of wrath receives a +10 ft. speed increase at 12<sup>th</sup> level and every three levels thereafter to serpent's slither. The black adder also receives a +1 increase in AC to serpent's grace at 15<sup>th</sup> level and every five levels thereafter. The black adder receives a bonus epic feat every five levels. The black adder may select from the following feats: Blinding Speed, Energy Resistance, Epic Reflexes, Epic Weapon Focus, Exceptional Deflection, Great Dexterity, Improved Death Attack, Improved Ki Strike, Improved Sneak At-

tack, Improved Stunning Fist, Infinite Deflection, Keen Strike, Vorpall Strike, Legendary Leaper, Penetrate Damage Reduction, Reflect Arrows, Righteous Strike, Self-Concealment, Shattering Strike, Superior Initiative.

## Bloodletter

The clergy of the Demon Queen Ostensis is a conflicted group of blood-thirty psychopaths. They fight among each other almost as much as they fight against those outside their abattoir-like temples. They fight in order to find favor in their goddess who demands that only the strong survive to maim and devour those too weak to survive on their own. Among the cruelest of Ostensis' servants are her bloodletters, the select priests of her vile church.

Bloodletters claim to be Ostensis' most loyal servants. Few doubt that they are her most destructive, their habits and desires bordering on cannibalistic. In the minds of bloodletters, only the caress of their goddess supersedes the consumption of human blood and flesh. Despite their unholy desires, bloodletters are as common in urban environments as they are in rural, hunting at night for the foolish and unwary as sacrifices to the Tormentor. In rural environments, bloodletters are the bane of hamlets and towns, often partnering with monsters like hags and often mistaken for lycanthropes or even undead like vampires and wights. In either case, bloodletters often control local Ostensis cults; even traditional clerics of Ostensis fear running afoul of these living monsters.

The vast majority of bloodletters were former clerics of Ostensis, although there is a minority of druids and rangers. Among the most fearful bloodletters are fallen paladins.

**Hit Dice:** d6

## Requirements

To qualify to become a bloodletter, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

**Alignment:** Chaotic evil

**Base Attack Bonus:** +6

**Skills:** Intimidate 3 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 8 ranks, Survival 3 ranks

**Spells:** Ability to cast divine spells of at least 4<sup>th</sup> level, and access to at least one of the following domains: Chaos, Death, Evil, Night. A character



**Table 3 – 2: The Bloodletter**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	0	+2	Rebuke Undead	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+0	0	+3	Night Eyes	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Dark Leech	+1 level of existing class
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Bloodlust	+1 level of existing class
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Rule the Cursed	
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5		+1 level of existing class
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Creature of the Night	+1 level of existing class
8th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Draw on the Blood	+1 level of existing class
9th	+6	+3	+3	+6		+1 level of existing class
10th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Curse of the Dark Lady	

who can cast at least one spell from a domain counts as having access for this purpose.

**Special:** The character must be an ardent worshiper of Ostensis, the Demon Queen.

### Class Skills

The bloodletter's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Chr), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis).

Skill points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

### Class Features

All of the following are class features of the bloodletter prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** A bloodletter is proficient with all simple weapons, short swords, long swords, light armor, and small shields.

**Spells per Day:** A bloodletter advances in spellcasting ability as well as in her prestige class. At each level gained as a bloodletter, excepting levels 5 and 10, the character gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in whatever

spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however, gain any other benefits a character of that class would have gained. This means that she adds the level of bloodletter to the level of another spellcaster class the character has, and then determines spells per day accordingly.

**Rebuke/Command Undead (Su):** The bloodletter receives the ability to rebuke or command undead as a cleric of his class level. If the bloodletter already has the ability to rebuke undead, any class granting this ability stack when determining the effective rebuke undead level. The bloodletter also receives Extra Turning as a bonus feat.

**Night Eyes (Ex):** The bloodletter receives darkvision up to 60 feet. If the character possessed darkvision before becoming a bloodletter, the character increases the benefit by 30 feet. A bloodletter's eyes glow a demonic blood red in darkness.

**Dark leech (Sp):** Once per day as a standard action, a third level bloodletter can cause the blood of a selected victim to leak from the ears and nose and leap into the bloodletter's mouth. The bloodletter must succeed in a ranged touch attack

on one target within 60 feet. The victim suffers 1d4 points of damage to Constitution which the bloodletter receives as a circumstance bonus to Constitution. The damage is restored within 1d6 rounds, the bloodletter losing the extra points at the same time. At 9<sup>th</sup> level, and every six levels thereafter, the bloodletter can use this ability one additional time per day. The bloodletter may repeatedly target the same victim, the damaged ability scores and duration being cumulative. *Dark leech* functions as a 4<sup>th</sup> level spell and is cast at the bloodletter's character level. *Dark leech* is a necromantic effect.

**Bloodlust (Su):** At 4<sup>th</sup> level, a bloodletter that successfully commits a critical attack on a victim can become consumed with bloodlust 1/week. As a standard action, the bloodletter receives a +4 bonus on all attacks and damage against the victim of a critical attack. The bloodletter is then committed to this foe until either the foe or the bloodletter dies, or until the duration (four rounds per class levels) expires, unable to attack another. The selected victim takes an additional 4 points of bleeding damage after the first successful attack for 2 rounds per the bloodletter's class level. A Heal check (DC equal to 10 + the bloodletter's class level + the bloodletter's Wisdom) or magical healing of any sort will stop the bleeding. Healing wounds does not release the bloodletter from the selected target. Bleeding damage from subsequent bloodlust attacks do not stack. If the bloodletter does not succeed in killing her foe before bloodlust expires, she will suffer 1 point of damage for every 3 points her victim suffered. At 7<sup>th</sup> level, and every three levels thereafter, the bloodletter can use bloodlust one additional time per day.

**Rule the Cursed (Su):** The bloodletter may attempt to turn neutral or good lycanthropes, or rebuke/command evil lycanthropes as a cleric of her class level.

**Creature of the night (Sp):** One per fortnight, the bloodletter gains the ability transform into a *creature of the night*, taking on a bestial form similar to that of a hybrid werewolf. While a *creature of the night*, the bloodletter receives bonuses and additional abilities for as many rounds as the caster's character level. The transformation into or out of the form is a full round action. The bloodletter the following while a *creature of the night*:

- +2d8 HD

- +1 to base attack bonus
- Fort +3, Ref +3
- Str +2, Dex +4, Con +4.
- Track and Weapon Focus (bite) as bonus feats.
- 2 claw attacks and 1 bite attack. The claw attack is considered the primary attack with damage equal to 1d4+ ½ the bloodletter's Strength modifier for each claw. The bite is considered a secondary attack with damage equal to 1d6+ the bloodletter's Strength modifier.
- Improved Trip on a successful bite attack.
- Damage reduction 10/silver.
- +2 natural armor.

A transformation into or out of the *creature of the night* allows the bloodletter to regain a full day's rest in hit points, but only once (in other words, if an injured bloodletter transforms into a creature of the night, she would regain her lost hit points; if she changed back to her natural state at the end of the duration, she would not regain any lost hit points). Although the bloodletter can use weapons with full proficiency available in her human shape, the bloodletter cannot cast spells requiring verbal components and loses any armor class bonus from armor (such armor falls away during the transformation) unless the bloodletter is outfitted in special armor. At 10<sup>th</sup> level, a bloodletter's attacks may cause the curse of lycanthropy; the Fortitude save DC to avoid this curse is 10 + the bloodletter's class level + Wisdom modifier.

*Creature of the night* is equivalent to a 6<sup>th</sup> level spell.

**Draw on the blood (Sp):** At 8<sup>th</sup> level, the bloodletter gains the ability to *draw on the blood*. As a ranged touch attack up to 60 feet away, 1/day the Bloodletter can cause a great hemorrhage in the victim, forcing blood to pour from the victim's eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth. The victim suffers 1d6 points of damage per the bloodletter's class level. If the victim fails a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the bloodletter's class level + Wisdom modifier), the victim suffers an additional 2d4 points of Constitution damage. *Draw on the blood* is equivalent to a 7<sup>th</sup> level spell. The bloodletter acquires an additional use of this power every six levels. This

ability is a necromantic effect.

**Curse of the Dark Lady (Sp):** Once per day, the bloodletter may speak a *curse of the Dark Lady*. This dreadful act randomly assigns one of six curses to one target within close range (25 feet + 5 feet every two levels) of the bloodletter unless the victim succeeds in a Will save (DC 10 + the bloodletter's class level + the bloodletter's Wisdom modifier). Possible curses include (but are by no means strictly limited to):

- 2 random abilities suffer a 4 points ability drain.
- Suffer a permanent 10 hit point drain.
- *Polymorphed* into a dire rat.
- Permanently *blind/deafened* (50% either) and *slowed*.
- Suffer 6 + the bloodletter's Wisdom modifier in points of bleeding damage for 10 rounds for every full, standard, and/or move-equivalent action taken per round. This damage is cumulative.
- Roll again. If the result is a 6 the second time, the victim immediately becomes a chaotic evil werewolf under the bloodletter's permanent control as a mixture of *curse of lycanthropy* and *dominate monster*.

With the exception of the werewolf transformation, damage and penalties from these effects may be restored with *greater restoration*, *limited wish*, *wish* or *miracle* cast within three days of the curse. Werewolves may be cured as normal. *Curse of the Dark Lady* functions as a 9<sup>th</sup> level spell.

**Epic Progression:** In addition to progressions described above, the bloodletter receives additional benefits as she progresses into epic levels. The bloodletter receives a bonus epic feat every four levels. The bloodletter may select from the following feats: Automatic Quicken Spell, Automatic Silent Spell, Automatic Still Spell, Bonus Domain, Epic Spell Focus, Epic Spell Penetration, Epic Spellcasting, Epic Weapon Focus, Epic Will, Ignore Material Components, Improved Alignment-Based Casting, Improved Darkvision, Improved Metamagic, Improved Spell Capacity, Legendary Tracker, Multispell, Negative Energy Burst, Permanent Emanation, Planar Turning, Spectral Strike, Spell

Stowaway, Spontaneous Domain Access, Spontaneous Spell, Undead Mastery, Zone of Animation.

## Contractor of Kharsis

Contractors of Kharsis are the most frequently encountered Merchants of Kharsis. They are the public face of the Merchants, working directly with other thieves' guilds, legitimate businesses, commoners, nobles, and governments in pursuit of the best deals for the Merchants. They are gifted not only with gilded tongues, but are more than capable of protecting themselves against those that would do them harm. Most contractors of Kharsis do not hesitate to reveal their allegiance, knowing that their association will often simplify the conclusion of an arrangement.

Most contractors of Kharsis were former rogues. As they are very affable chit chatters, many have bardic backgrounds. While a small number of contractors were rangers, few other classes find much interest in the prestige class.

**Hit Dice:** d6.

### Requirements

To qualify to become a contractor of Kharsis, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

**Alignment:** Any non-good

**Skills:** Appraise 3 ranks, Bluff or Diplomacy 9 ranks, Gather Information 3 ranks, Sense Motive 6 ranks

**Feats:** Negotiator or Persuasive

**Special:** The character must have sneak attack +3d6. The character must have been admitted into the Merchants of Kharsis by a senior Merchant, having been sealed by the *merchant's brand*.

### Class Skills

The contractor of Kharsis' class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (local) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 8 + Int Modifier

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the contractor of Kharsis prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** A contractor of Kharsis is proficient with all simple weapons, plus the hand crossbow, rapier, sap, scimitar, short sword, and shortbow. A contractor is proficient with light armor but not with shields.

**Merchant's Brand (Ex):** All Merchants of Kharsis are required to take on a seal known as the merchant's brand. The merchant's brand looks like a realistic tattoo of the Merchants of Kharsis' symbol, a desert vulture clutching a gold coin in its talons. The merchant's seal supposedly disallows treacherous acts against the Merchants from the person wearing it. Although the seal's appearance can be duplicated, its powers cannot; furthermore, a true Merchant of Kharsis instantly knows the difference between a fake and real seal.

Among other things, the merchant's seal makes a contractor of Kharsis immortal. If the contractor is brought to -10 or fewer hit points, he does not die. Within 1d4 rounds, his body melts into the ground and turns into sand. The sand returns to one of the many Merchant hideouts Drm where the contractor is reconstituted; how this process takes place is unknown. The only way to permanently kill a contractor of Kharsis is to remove the merchant's seal from his body through magical means that have yet to be determined. It is known that Merchants that are reconstituted return with 1 point Constitution drain and one character level lower (the contractor loses a level in the class that he most recently advanced).

**Contract (Ex):** The contractor of Kharsis receives a bonus on interactions with others. With helpful, friendly, and indifferent people, the contractor ap-

plies the associated bonus to his Bluff or Diplomacy checks; against unfriendly or hostile people, the bonus is applied to his Intimidate checks. He may also use his contract ability to alter documents, adding to his Forgery skill. As he is used to manipulating others, the contractor is especially resistant to being manipulated. He receives the associated bonus to Sense Motive checks.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** This is exactly like the rogue ability of the same name. The extra damage dealt increases by 1d6 every three levels beginning at 3<sup>rd</sup> (6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and so on). If a contractor of Kharsis gets a sneak attack bonus from another source (such as rogue levels), the bonuses on damage stack.

**Honest Face (Ex):** The contractor of Kharsis always comes across as the epitome of honesty in all associations. He has spell resistance of 12 + his character level against spells and spell-like abilities from the school of Divination; he is immune to supernatural and mundane attempts that mimic such effects.

**Dealmaker (Ex):** The contractor of Kharsis can speak so convincingly that he can effectively turn anyone he meets into an ally willing to take him up on any offer, even one that is not beneficial. Once a day, the contractor can cause an effect similar to a *suggestion*. The contractor's deal functions as a *suggestion* cast at his character level although the effect requires one full-round action worth of talking with a target. The target receives a Will save DC equal to 13 + the contractor's Charisma modifier. Failure indicates that the target will agree to a deal even if it is not in his best interest; conversely, a contractor can attempt to use his dealmaker talents in the manner of *suggestion*'s description although the subject receives a +2 bonus to his saving throw.

**Table 3 – 3: Contractor of Kharsis**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 <sup>st</sup>	+0	+0	+2	+2	Merchant's Brand
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+1	+0	+3	+3	Contract +2
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+2	+1	+3	+3	Honest Face, Sneak Attack +1d6
4 <sup>th</sup>	+3	+1	+4	+4	Contract +4
5 <sup>th</sup>	+3	+1	+4	+4	Dealmaker
6 <sup>th</sup>	+4	+2	+5	+5	Contract +6, Sneak Attack +1d6
7 <sup>th</sup>	+5	+2	+5	+5	Backbiter
8 <sup>th</sup>	+6	+2	+6	+6	Contract +8
9 <sup>th</sup>	+6	+3	+6	+6	Backstabber, Sneak Attack +1d6
10 <sup>th</sup>	+7	+3	+7	+7	Contract +10

Dealmaker is not a magical effect but rather a reflection of the contractor's deal making skills. The contractor may use dealer an additional time per day at 10<sup>th</sup> level and every five levels thereafter.

**Backbiter (Su):** The contractor of Kharsis may speak ill of those with whom he has had business dealings, affecting their ability to interact with others that succumb to the contractor's derision. Once a week, the contractor of Kharsis may backbite. This effect is similar to dealmaker save that in addition to being a supernatural effect, the *suggestion* turns those that fail the Will saving throw against a specific target, shifting reactions two degrees negative. Victims of backbiter need not personally know who the contractor's deriding, but must be able to recognize the target based upon the contractor's description. Restoring reaction occurs as per normal. The contractor may use backbiter an additional time at 12<sup>th</sup> level and every five levels thereafter. Backbiter is a language-dependent, mind-affecting compulsion.

**Backstabber (Ex):** The contractor may betray those with whom he has made deals. Any that have taken out a legitimate contract with the contractor or has succumb to the contractor's dealmaker or backbiter abilities suffers full damage from the contractor's sneak attack. The contractor benefits from this ability for 10 days after the establishment of a contract or the initial affect of the dealmaker or backbiter effects. Once this time expires, the victims have take more contracts with the contractor. Once the contractor engages in melee against his mark, he benefits from backstabber for his Charisma modifier + 3 rounds. The contractor may use backstabber an additional time at 15<sup>th</sup> level and every five levels thereafter.

**Epic Progression:** In addition to progressions described above, the contractor of Kharsis receives additional benefits as he progresses into epic levels. The contractor receives a bonus epic feat every four levels. The contractor may select from the following feats: Additional Magic Item Space, Blinding Speed, Dexterous Will, Epic Dodge, Epic Reflexes, Epic Reputation, Epic Skill Focus, Epic Will, Great Charisma, Great Dexterity, Improved Sneak Attack, Sneak Attack of Opportunity, Superior Initiative.

## Darkling Warrior

The sinister and mysterious enforcers of The Ash that rule the nation of Ashtur, Darkling Warriors are known for three things. All wear long, flowing charcoal colored cloaks; all wield the notorious

darkling swords; and all have a tendency to appear when least expected. They are among the most deadly warriors in Drm, their skills with swords – particularly those forged from the wondrous darkling metal mined from the mountains of Burquebain – is virtually unsurpassed.

Darkling Warriors are tasked with the responsibility of discovering and eliminating threats to the status quo in Ashtur. This responsibility often takes a Darkling Warrior beyond the borders of Ashtur. While not necessarily evil like assassins, Darkling Warriors are typically completely dedicated to their land and masters. However, on occasion, a Darkling Warrior will abandon his duties and train others in the Darkling arts. Thus, while most Darkling Warriors are Lawful Neutral, Darkling Warriors of other alignments have been encountered.

Most Darkling Warriors rise from the ranks of fighters; however, a fair number were former rangers or monks and the odd rogue has taken the darkened path. Most other classes are too engrossed in study or devotion to become dedicated trainees.

**Hit Dice:** d8

### Requirements

To qualify to become a Darkling Warrior, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +7

**Skills:** Hide 2 ranks, Intimidate 7 ranks, Search 2 ranks, Sense Motive 2 ranks, Survival 2 ranks

**Feats:** Improved Critical (any slashing weapon), Investigator, Track, Weapon Focus (any slashing weapon)

**Special:** The candidate must undergo a special test and survive a ritual designed specifically for the candidate as determined by The Ash, the mysterious rulers of Ashtur.

### Class Skills

The Darkling Warrior class skills are Concentration (Con), Gather Information (Int), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Chr), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

## Class Features

All of the following are class features of Darkling Warrior prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** The Darkling Warrior is proficient with all simple and martial weapons and light and medium armor.

**Dark Cut (Ex):** A Darkling Warrior uses any slashing weapon with supreme confidence. The Darkling Warrior is proficient with all such weapons, even those that normally require the Exotic Weapon Proficiency Feat. Furthermore, the Darkling Warrior applies a +1 bonus to all attacks with a slashing weapon as if he possessed the Weapon Focus feat. This bonus stacks with the bonuses from Weapon Focus, Greater Weapon Focus, and/or Epic Weapon Focus feats the Darkling Warrior possesses for a specific slashing weapon. The Darkling Warrior suffers a -4 penalty to attacks with all other weapon types to a minimum of 1.

**Darkened Mind (Su):** The Darkling Warrior receives a +4 bonus to all saves against spells from the school of Enchantment.

**Dark Step (Ex):** At 3<sup>rd</sup> level and every three levels thereafter, the Darkling Warrior acquires a +2 bonus to the following skills: Climb, Hide, Jump, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival. These boons come at a cost; every level he must place at least one rank in four to one of the skills above. Furthermore, his Speed also increases by 5. At 6<sup>th</sup> level, the Darkling Warrior increases his Speed another 5. At 9<sup>th</sup> level, the Darkling Warrior increases his Speed another

5; in addition, he moves so fast that he can use an effect mechanically identical to *dimension door* 1/day at his class level. All dark step abilities only work if the Darkling Warrior is wearing no armor or light armor or carrying a light load.

**Dark Technique (Ex):** The Darkling Warrior may select one of the following feats as a bonus feat: Greater Weapon Focus, Greater Weapon Specialization, Weapon Focus, or Weapon Specialization. The Darkling Warrior must apply these feats to a slashing weapon.

**Darker Cut (Ex):** The Darkling Warrior receives a +2 bonus on damage rolls from slashing weapons as if he possessed the Weapon Specialization feat. This bonus stacks with the bonuses from Weapon Specialization, Greater Weapon Specialization, and/or Epic Weapon Specialization feats the Darkling Warrior possesses for a specific slashing weapon. The Darkling Warrior suffers a -6 penalty to damage with all other weapon types to a minimum of 1.

**Dark Twinkling (Su):** Once per day, the Darkling Warrior may make an additional attack with a slashing weapon for four consecutive rounds. Dark twinkling stacks with effects such as *haste*. Dark twinkling does not work if the Darkling Warrior wears anything heavier than light armor or is carrying a light load.

**Darkest Cut (Ex):** The Darkling Warrior doubles the threat range for piercing or slashing weapons for the purpose of determining a critical threat. This increased range stacks with the bonus from Improved Critical the Darkling Warrior possesses for a specific slashing weapon or with such weapons that possess the keen enhancement. Re-

**Table 3 – 4: The Darkling Warrior**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Dark Cut
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Darkened Mind
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Dark Step
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Dark Technique
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Darker Cut
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Dark Step
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Dark Twinkling
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Dark Technique
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Dark Step
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Darkest Cut

member that two doublings equal a tripling and so forth.

**Epic Progression:** The Darkling Warrior's Speed increases by 5 feet at 12<sup>th</sup> level and every three levels thereafter; furthermore, the Darkling Warrior may use his *dimension door* ability at 18<sup>th</sup> level and every nine levels thereafter. At 14<sup>th</sup> level and every 7 levels thereafter, the Darkling Warrior acquires an additional use of dark twinkling per day. The Darkling Warrior receives a bonus epic feat every four levels. The Darkling Warrior may select from the following feats: Blinding Speed, Devastating Critical, Epic Fortitude, Epic Weapon Focus, Epic Weapon Specialization, Exceptional Deflection, Improved Combat Reflexes, Improved Whirlwind Attack, Infinite Deflection, Legendary Tracker, Overwhelming Critical, Penetrate Damage Reduction, Reflect Arrows, Spellcasting Harrier, Superior Initiative.

## Dawnbringer

Of the good-aligned Aldra, Nemaria is arguably the most accepting. In all beings, great and small, Nemaria sees hope and potential. Her unending optimism has earned her many converts, especially those seeking new lives. Among her clergy, Nemaria has many that offer hope to the down-trodden and destitute. In their aim to emulate the Falcon Queen, these servants, known as dawn-bringers, are positive almost to a fault; however, while they offer hope and joy to all that would have it, they know that all actions must be tempered by goodness and patience. Thus, dawn-bringers are stalwart foes of darkness and evil.

Dawnbringers actively seek out opportunities to eradicate darkness and to bring hope to the hopeless. As a result, most are not active participants in church matters; nevertheless, some of the greatest Nemarians in Drmian history were dawn-bringers.

The vast majority of dawnbringers were clerics of Nemaria; however, there are plenty of multi-classed bard/clerics and even the odd, former paladin.

**Hit Dice:** d8

## Requirements

To qualify to become a dawnbringer, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

**Alignment:** Any good

**Base Attack Bonus:** +5

**Feats:** Spell Focus (enchantment)

**Skills:** Diplomacy 10 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 7 ranks

**Spells:** Ability to cast divine spells of at least 4<sup>th</sup> level, and access to one of the following domains: Air, Good, Healing, Luck, or Sun. A character who can cast at least one spell from a domain counts as having access for this purpose. Must have the ability to cast *light*.

**Special:** Ability to channel positive energy and turn undead. The character must be an ardent worshipper of Nemaria, the Falcon Queen.

## Class Skills

Dawnbringer class skills are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Chr), Gather Information (Chr), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Listen (Int), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis).

Skill points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.  
forth.

## Class Features

All of the following are class features of the dawnbringer prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Dawnbringers are proficient with all simple weapons, light and medium armor, and with shields.

**Spells per Day:** Beginning at 2<sup>nd</sup> level and every level thereafter, dawnbringers advance in spell-casting ability as well as in their prestige class. When a new dawnbringer level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if she also gained a level in whatever spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however, gain any other benefits a character of that class would have gained. This means that she adds the level of dawnbringer to the level of another spellcaster class the character has, and then determines spells per day accordingly.

**Child of the Falcon Queen (Su):** As a worshipper of the Falcon Queen, the dawnbringer is viewed in a friendly fashion by many bird-like and sky-faring creatures. Good or neutral birds or bird-like animals, magical beasts, or air elementals will not attack a dawnbringer unless provoked. Good creatures of the types listed above have an initial



**Table 3 – 5: The Dawnbringer**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	0	+2	Child of the Falcon-queen	
2nd	+1	+0	0	+3	Child of the Clouds Light's Power	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Halo of Happiness	+1 level of existing class
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Joy	+1 level of existing class
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Hope Eternal	+1 level of existing class
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Aurora	+1 level of existing class
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Light of Dawn	+1 level of existing class
8th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Celestial Dew	+1 level of existing class
9th	+6	+3	+3	+6	True Restoration	+1 level of existing class
10th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Divine Renewal	+1 level of existing class

reaction of “helpful” to the dawnbringer while neutral creatures are initially “friendly.” The dawnbringer also receive a +2 sacred bonus on all Animal Empathy and Handle Animal checks when interacting with birds and bird-like magical beasts.

**Child of the Clouds (Sp):** Once per day, the dawnbringer may join her brethren in the skies. The dawnbringer may cast *fly* at her character level in areas typically inundated with natural light. In other words, a dawnbringer may *fly* during a stormy environment outside, or in a large temple structure with many windows and a regular source of natural light. Casting *darkness* on a dawnbringer in such places would have no adverse affect on her ability to *fly*. However, the dawnbringer could not take advantage of this ability in subterranean locations or in places of eternal (natural or supernatural) darkness. Casting *daylight* or similar magic in such locations would not allow the dawnbringer to *fly*.

**Light's Power (Ex):** The dawnbringer acquires the Extra Turning feat as described on page 32 of the *Player's Handbook*. The dawnbringer also casts

*remove curse* as if her caster level were three levels higher.

**Halo of Happiness (Sp):** Once per day, the dawnbringer may glow under a *halo of happiness*. As a child of the goddess of friendship and renewal, the dawnbringer can impress her interest in helping sentient beings find the light within themselves. This spell-like ability functions in a manner similar to the *charm monster* spell cast at the dawnbringer's character level with the following modifications. First, the effect will not work on a being the dawnbringer suspects she will have to harm or lead into harms way; any order/suggestion to engage in an action or inaction that will bring harm to the recipient or those important to the recipient results in the immediate end of the spell-like effect (the affected being is immediately and permanently “hostile” to the dawnbringer for betraying a trust). Second, upon the terminus of the *halo's* duration, the beneficiary of the *halo of happiness* will regard the dawnbringer as a friend and maintain a “helpful” attitude towards her regardless of alignment so long as the dawnbringer and those associated with her do

nothing to soil the friendship. In the event that the *halo* is even attempted to be used to coerce or harm another (DM's discretion), the effect immediately ends and the recipient immediately becomes "hostile." *Halo of Happiness* functions as a 5<sup>th</sup> level divine spell.

**Joy (Sp):** Once per day, the dawnbringer may confer *joy*. *Joy* provides all allied creatures within a 30-foot radius of the dawnbringer a +2 sacred bonus to ability checks, skill checks, and saving throws. Those affected by *joy* also gain a +2 bonus to attacks and damage against undead and any evil creature adversely affected by sunlight. Additionally, for as many rounds as the dawnbringer's levels, those within *joy* feel an exuberance so intense that they are immune to all spells from the school of Enchantment (*joy* does not dispel or otherwise affect Enchantment spells already in affect). This spell-like ability lasts for as many rounds as the dawnbringer's character level and does not require the dawnbringer's concentration. *Joy* functions as a 6<sup>th</sup> level spell. The dawnbringer may use *joy* an additional time per day for every seven levels of the dawnbringer class.

**Hope Eternal (Sp):** By drawing on her undying optimism, the dawnbringer can renew the hope in even the most damaged souls. The dawnbringer may cast *restoration* once per day at 4<sup>th</sup> level and one additional time every day for every four character levels possessed.

**Aurora (Su):** A dawnbringer may call on an aurora 1/week as a full round action. This prayer engulfs the dawnbringer in a nimbus of holy light that captures the attention of most non-good unallied or indifferent beings within sight of the dawnbringer. Most non-good beings within the radius must make a Will save DC 16 + the dawnbringer's Wisdom modifier. Beings that fail are subject to one of the following results depending on their alignment and point of origin. The dawnbringer must be able to communicate verbally in the language(s) of and may not be in the midst of hostilities with potentially affected creatures. The dawnbringer may call on aurora for as many rounds as her class level, forcing creatures in her line of sight to make saves each round to avoid one of the following effects.

Against mortal creatures from the Mortal Coil (including animals, giants, humanoids, magical beasts, and monstrous humanoids), aurora allows the dawnbringer to attempt to temporarily turn their alignment one step towards good. If suc-

cessful, the creature will have a temporary moral adjustment closer to good and will not attack the dawnbringer or the dawnbringer's allies unless provoked. This adjustment lasts for a number of days equal to the dawnbringer's class levels. Affected creatures attempt to uphold the ways of their new alignment to the best of their ability and view the dawnbringer as a trusted friend and mentor. After the period of "goodness" ends, the affected creature gains another Will save each day, the DC reduced by 3 if the dawnbringer is not present; there is no reduction in DC if the dawnbringer is within 30 feet of the affected creature. Those that overcome the affect will view the Dawnbringer indifferently but immediately return to their previous alignment. This use of aurora has the same restrictions as described in *halo of happiness*.

Against good and neutral aberrations, neutral elementals, fey, neutral outsiders, plants, and vermin, *aurora* effectively *stuns* those that failed to save for as many rounds as dawnbringer's class levels.

Against evil aberrations, evil elementals, evil outsiders, and all undead, *aurora* forces targets to submit to the will of goodness for as many rounds as the dawnbringer's level. Such creatures ability checks, attack bonuses, initiative, and skill checks receive a -2 penalty and are *slowed*; variable rolls, like those associated with damage, suffer a -2 penalty per die. Those who succumb to aurora will do everything in their power to reach and destroy the dawnbringer at the expense of other actions.

**Light of the Dawn (Sp):** Dawnbringers may call on the *light of the dawn* once per day. When the dawnbringer calls on this power, a burst of light surrounds her as wing-like appendages of light unfurl from her back. *Light of the dawn* affects a 20 foot radius around the dawnbringer. When cast in an area currently inundated with natural light or under the effects of a *daylight* spell, all saves against *light of the dawn* receive a -4 sacred penalty. All evil creatures within the blast radius must succeed in a Will save DC 17 + the dawnbringer's Wisdom modifier. Evil creatures that fail their save suffer 1d6 points of holy damage for every three total character levels (to a maximum of 7d6 points of holy damage) possessed by the dawnbringer and are shaken for one round per the dawnbringer's class levels. Those that successfully save suffer half damage and are not subject to being shaken. Undead in the blast radius not only suffer holy damage, they

also suffer the effects of being turned or destroyed automatically; undead that fail their save by more than 5 points may be destroyed outright if they fail an additional Will save DC 17 + the dawnbringer's Wisdom modifier. With the exception of turning or destroying undead, all effects are subject to spell resistance. Allied good creatures within the blast radius receive a +4 sacred bonus to their morale and initiative for one round per the dawnbringer's class level. *Light of the dawn* functions as a 7<sup>th</sup> level spell and can be used an additional time per day for every seven dawnbringer levels possessed.

**Celestial Dew (Sp):** The dawnbringer may call on *celestial dew* 1/day. *Celestial dew* may be called upon in any area frequently touched by natural light or an area under the effects of the *daylight* spell. Thus, the *dew* would work in a tavern or house with windows, while it would not work in a subterranean location without the benefit of *daylight*. Causing fluffy, glowing clouds to appear overhead within a 60 foot radius of the dawnbringer, the spell calls down a unique form of holy water; the *dew* lasts for as many rounds as the dawnbringer's class levels. All associated spell-like effects function at the dawnbringer's total character level. All good allied beings within the radius benefit from *lesser restoration*, *protection from evil*, and *remove curse* while under the *dew*; they also regain 3 hit points per round (these additional points can never exceed a character's hit point maximum). All evil beings within the area are affected as if *greased*. Evil outsiders suffer 1d4 points of damage per round, while undead suffer 1d8 points of damage per round while under the *dew*. If cast under the open sky (even at night), in addition to the above effects, *celestial dew* also confer the power of *joy*. *Celestial dew* functions as an 8<sup>th</sup> level spell and can be used an additional time per day for every seven dawnbringer levels.

**True Restoration (Sp):** Once per week, a dawnbringer may call on the power of *true restoration*. *True restoration* is identical to *greater restoration* save it can restore levels and Constitution points lost due to death. In order to regain lost levels or Constitution points, the dawnbringer must cast *true restoration* within one day of the resurrected body per the dawnbringer's class level. *True restoration* functions as an 8<sup>th</sup> level spell.

**Divine Renewal (Sp):** A dawnbringer may call of *divine renewal* 1/month. When this power is called upon, the dawnbringer's body is surrounded by the light of a new dawn. This powerful

spell-like ability functions with the combined powers of *joy*, *aurora*, and *celestial dew* with the added benefits of completely *restoring* all allied good creatures within 60 feet of the dawnbringer and returning them to full hit points. It also removes status effects (such as *blindness* or *stun*), and grants an additional 30 temporary hit points to all good creatures. The benefits last for as many rounds as the dawnbringer's class level. *Divine renewal* functions as a 9<sup>th</sup> level spell.

**Epic Progression:** In addition to progressions described above, the dawnbringer receives additional benefits as she progresses into epic levels. The dawnbringer receives a bonus epic feat every three levels. The dawnbringer may select from the following feats: Additional Magic Item Space, Automatic Quicken Spell, Automatic Silent Spell, Automatic Still Spell, Bonus Domain, Craft Epic Wondrous Item, Epic Leadership, Epic Reputation, Epic Spell Focus, Epic Spell Penetration, Epic Spellcasting, Epic Will, Great Charisma, Ignore Material Components, Improved Alignment-Based Casting, Improved Spell Capacity, Multispell, Permanent Emanation, Planar Turning, Positive Energy Aura, Spectral Strike, Spell Opportunity, Spontaneous Domain Access, Tenacious Magic.

## Magistrate

These dreaded and powerful wizards are the sworn enemies of the Aldra and all other gods and powers. Also known as "Godfoes" or "Masters of The Word," magistrates hail from the far north and claim to be descendants of Magistrates of Xyl. The Magistrates were said to have been as mighty as the gods and earned the wrath of the powers for their pride. Despite a terrible curse laid upon them by the divine powers, The Magistrates became very powerful. Relatively recently, the supposed descendants of the Magistrates of Xyl were banished from their ancient home by a new cabal of Word Speakers, the Savants of the Mists. Now, the magistrates travel Drm seeking to reclaim the might of their ancestors.

Magistrates spend the bulk of their time in hiding, fearing assaults from clerics, paladins, and other mortal representatives of the Aldra. As such, it is very difficult for would-be magistrates to train under current Godfoes. Most libraries and centers of learning, including Ashtur's Black Hall Library, sensitive to offending the Aldra and their representatives, maintain no documentation on magistrates. However, there are rumors that magistrates have made pacts with evil outsiders and that they can be contacted in a manner similar to

demons or devils. Needless to say, the gifts given by magistrates, although valuable, are not without a high price.

**Hit Dice:** d4

**Requirements:**

To qualify to become a magistrate, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

**Alignment:** Any evil or Chaotic Neutral

**Spells:** Ability to cast 5<sup>th</sup> level arcane spells from at least three different schools of magic

**Skills:** Knowledge (arcana) 12 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 6 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 6 ranks, Spellcraft 12 ranks

**Feats:** Speaker of the Word, Spell Focus (any one school), any one metamagic feat

**Class Skills:** Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy) (Int), Craft (Int), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills taken individually) (Int), Profession (Wis), Spellcraft (Int).

Skill points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

**Class Features**

All the following are class features of the magistrate prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** The magistrate gains no proficiency in any armor or weapon.

**Curse of the Magistrates (Su):** The magistrate is cursed by the Aldra. Upon taking a level as a magistrate, the magistrate cannot be healed by any divine spellcaster. Likewise, divine spellcasters are unable to return life to the magistrate. The magistrate may use potions and other healing magic items without penalty. Blackguards, clerics, paladins, and certain other classes may attempt to turn or rebuke a magistrate as if he were undead; however, unlike turning attempts made against undead, such acts against the magistrate impose –4 circumstance penalties on his armor class, attacks, and saving throws for the duration.

**Absorb the Word (Su):** The magistrate may attempt to draw memorized or available arcane spells from the minds or hearts of other arcane casters. 1/day every other magistrate level, the magistrate may attempt to absorb The Word (thus

**Table 3 – 6: The Magistrate**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1 <sup>st</sup>	+0	+0	+0	+2	Curse of the Magistrates	+1 level of existing class
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+1	+0	+0	+3	Absorb the Word	+1 level of existing class
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+1	+1	+1	+3	One with the Word	+1 level of existing class
4 <sup>th</sup>	+2	+1	+1	+4	Blight of the Word	+1 level of existing class
5 <sup>th</sup>	+2	+1	+1	+4	Mark of the Magistrate	+1 level of existing class
6 <sup>th</sup>	+3	+2	+2	+5	Cloak of the Word	+1 level of existing class
7 <sup>th</sup>	+3	+2	+2	+5	Blood of the Word	+1 level of existing class
8 <sup>th</sup>	+4	+2	+2	+6		+1 level of existing class
9 <sup>th</sup>	+4	+3	+3	+6	Ravaging of the Word	+1 level of existing class
10 <sup>th</sup>	+5	+3	+3	+7	Mark of the Magistrate	+1 level of existing class

a 2<sup>nd</sup> level magistrate can use this 1/day, while a 6<sup>th</sup> level magistrate can use it 3/day). The magistrate must make a successful touch or ranged touch attack (with a maximum distance of 30 feet) on the intended target. If struck, the magistrate and the target make opposed checks, the target using Concentration modifier and the magistrate Spellcraft modifier. If the target succeeds, nothing occurs. If the magistrate wins the check, he may steal the spell. Usually, the magistrate will receive a random spell; however, the magistrate may attempt to take a specific prepared or available spell. In the event that the target does not have the specific prepared or available spell, the magistrate's use of Absorb the Word is wasted. Once a spell is taken, the victim loses access to the spell for 1 minute per spell level; the magistrate must cast the spell during this duration. The magistrate does not gain any metamagic feats benefits and the like that may be associated with the absorbed spell. Furthermore, a magistrate may only take spells to which he has level and/or school access. While the magistrate may cast the spell at his caster level, he must still supply the required components (material, somatic, verbal, XP, and any focus). With Absorb the Word, the magistrate may exceed his spells per day until the absorbed spells are used up or expired; however, his maximum number of Absorb spells is equal to his character level. Absorb the Word works only against arcane spells. It has no effect on divine spells, psionic powers, or spell-like abilities.

**One with the Word (Su):** The magistrate may apply an additional 3 ranks to his Spellcraft skill with each magistrate level gained. The magistrate may never exceed a maximum of 9 additional bonus ranks with this method.

**Blight of the Word (Su):** The magistrate may burn prepared or stolen spells for a blast of pure mystic energy. Blight of the Word is a ranged touch attack with medium range that deals 1d6 points of damage +4 additional points per level of spell (prepared, not stolen) burned; thus a blight cast from a *fireball* spell deals 1d6+12 points of damage.

**Mark of the Magistrate (Su):** The magistrate inherits a mark. The magistrate's body, neck, and face become covered in hideous, welt-like markings the color of dried blood shaped like ancient Draconic text. These marks are filled with The Word and, as the magistrate grows more experienced with magic, the marks confer him greater power. The mark grants a magistrate a personal boon per the *permanency* spell without the requi-

site xp cost or a bonus feat from the list below. Each time a magistrate makes use of his mark, he suffers a 1 point drain to his Wisdom for *permanency* benefits or a 1 point drain to his Constitution for item creation or metamagic feats; these drains cannot be restored by any means save those of divine origin. The magistrate also suffers a -4 penalty to all Charisma-based effects with the use of a mark as they form horrid scars upon the body; a successful Disguise check DC 10 + 5 per the number of marks used allows the magistrate to conceal these scars. A magistrate may select one of the following feats with mark of the magistrate: Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus, Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Counterspell, Magical Aptitude, Spell Focus, Spell Mastery, Spell Penetration, or any item creation feat or metamagic feat. The magistrate is never under any obligation to use the mark, although if he does not use the mark before he attains an additional level, he forever loses its potency.

**Cloak of the Words (Sp):** The magistrate acquires spell resistance 14 + his class level.

**Blood of the Word (Ex):** The magistrate becomes an outsider. Among other things, outsider status makes the magistrate immune to spells that specifically target humanoids, such as *charm person*, but does allow the magistrate to be hedged out by a *magic circle* spell against her alignment. All summoning spells cast by the magistrate function as if the magistrate possessed three additional caster levels.

**Ravaging of the Word (Su):** Once per day for every three class levels possessed, the magistrate may cause harm to those that speak the Word. The magistrate must burn six prepared (not stolen) spell levels in order to use ravaging of the Word before attempting a ranged touch attack against any spellcaster (arcane or divine) within close range (25 feet plus 5 feet per two class levels). A victim struck by the attack suffers one point of damage per spell available or prepared. The target must also make a Concentration check equal to the damage dealt or lose 1d4 + the magistrate's class level in spell levels; the spells lost are selected randomly and may be regained in the traditional fashion (rest, meditation, prayer, etc.). Ravaging of the Word is also effective against creatures with spell-like abilities; such beings suffer damage according to the number of spell-like abilities available in addition to any class-related spells (e.g., a solar would suffer 85 points of damage, 35 for its spell-like abilities, and an additional

50 for its cleric spells and domain spells). Ravaging of the Word is a mind-influencing effect.

**Epic Progression:** In addition to progressions described above, the magistrate receives additional benefits as she progresses into epic levels. The magistrate may gain a mark at 15<sup>th</sup> level and every five levels thereafter; the magistrate is under no obligation to use the mark, although if he does not use the mark before he attains an additional level, he forever loses its potency. The magistrate receives a bonus epic feat every six levels. The magistrate may select from the following feats: Additional Magic Item Space, Automatic Quicken Spell, Automatic Silent Spell, Automatic Still Spell, Craft Epic Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Epic Rod, Craft Epic Staff, Craft Epic Wondrous Item, Efficient Item Creation, Enhance Spell, Epic Spell Focus, Epic Spell Penetration, Epic Spellcasting, Epic Will, Familiar Spell, Forge Epic Ring, Great Intelligence, Ignore Material Components, Improved Combat Casting, Improved Heighten Spell, Improved Metamagic, Improved Spell Capacity, Improved Spell Resistance, Intensify Spell, Master Staff, Master Wand, Multispell, Permanent Emanation, Scribe Epic Scroll, Spell Knowledge, Spell Opportunity, Spell Stowaway, Spontaneous Spell, Tenacious Magic.

## Sentinel

These were the greatest wizards of the Vhendumothian Empire. According to legends, sentinels were capable of great feats with The Word, making them among the most powerful arcane casters in Drmian history. Their training allowed sentinels to accomplish their primary directive: to protect the Vhendumothian Empire through power of the voice and flame. On the one hand, Sentinels were the Empire's chief diplomats, dealing with allies, enemies, and neutral parties in attempts to improve trade, avoid war, or establish new relationships. On the other hand, the sentinels were also spies and assassins, capable of removing obstacles from a distance without the need for magical accoutrements. In Vhendumoth, they were often referred to as the Ever Seeing Eyes or the Scathing Voices.

Since the Fall of Fortens' Keep and the destruction of Vhendumoth, it has widely been thought that the arts of the sentinels were lost. However, there are a few scholars and Sages who believe that at least three of Crin's Sacred are still alive and that they were sentinels before their apotheosis. It is also possible that ancient texts detailing the path taken to become a sentinel may be found

in the Black Hall Library of Ashtur or the Lost Library of Evelyn's Keep.

**Hit Dice:** d4

## Requirements

To qualify to become a sentinel, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

**Feats:** Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (evocation), and Spell Penetration

**Skills:** Bluff or Diplomacy 7 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 16 ranks, Spellcraft 16 ranks

**Spellcasting:** Ability to cast 7<sup>th</sup> level arcane spells

**Special:** A would-be sentinel cannot embark upon this path without aid. Such a one must either find one of Crin's Sacred or one of their pupils or else learn the powers of the sentinel by accessing esoteric knowledge culled from ancient texts scattered across Drm.

**Class Skills:** Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Chr), Intimidate (Chr), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int).

Skill points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

## Class Features

All the following are class features of the sentinel prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** Sentinels gain no proficiency in any armor or weapon.

**Spells per Day/Spells Known:** Each level, a sentinel gains new spells per day (and spells known if applicable) as if he had also gained a level in an arcane spellcasting class to which he belonged before adding the prestige class level. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of turning or destroying undead, a bonus feat, and so on). If he had more than one arcane spellcasting class before becoming a sentinel, he must decide to which class to add each level for the purpose of determining spells per day and spells known.

**Scar of the Sentinel (Su):** A sentinel is resilient against attacks that would harm him or his charge, or cause him to betray his duty. With a tattoo on his face that silently swears fealty to the

**Table 3 – 7: The Sentinel**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1 <sup>st</sup>	+0	+0	+0	+2	<i>Scar of the Sentinel</i>	+1 level of existing class
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+1	+0	+0	+3	Special Ability	+1 level of existing class
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+1	+1	+1	+3	Special Ability	+1 level of existing class
4 <sup>th</sup>	+2	+1	+1	+4	Special Ability	+1 level of existing class
5 <sup>th</sup>	+2	+1	+1	+4	Special Ability	+1 level of existing class

Vhendimmothian Empire, the sentinel takes on a mantle of protection. With the Scar, the sentinel receives a +2 bonus to all saves against spells or spell-like abilities from the school of Enchantment and from the school of Evocation.

In return for this power, the sentinel suffers a -1 penalty to saves against spells from every school save enchantment and Evocation.

**Special Abilities:** Beginning at second level and every level thereafter, a sentinel gains a special ability of her or his choice among the following.

**Eye of the Sentinel (Sp)** 1/day: This special ability allows the sentinel to track the movements of one living, mortal creature through an invisible eye. The sentinel must be within 60 feet of the target in order to initially establish the *Eye*. Creatures with spell resistance immediately know when this ability is in use and may choose to resist the attempt (normal spell resistance rules apply). The *Eye* does not function within an *anti-magic field*. The *Eye of the Sentinel* may view the target from any angle from a distance of up to 30 feet; the *Eye* may also follow the target anywhere so long as the target is on the same plane of existence as the Sentinel. The *Eye* persists for one day per the sentinel's class level. The *Eye* continues to follow a target even if the sentinel stops watching for a time. Watching on the part of the sentinel requires a standard action, causing the sentinel's eyes to glow a brilliant yellow. A sentinel is somewhat distracted with regards to his own environment and does not gain the benefit of Dexterity bonuses to his AC while he is actively using the *Eye*. Attempts to avoid the *Eye of the Sentinel*, such as by illusion, Hiding, or shape-alteration are utterly useless once the *Eye* has been assigned to its target. Gaze and sight-related attacks against the *Eye of the Sentinel* may affect the sentinel.

*Eye of the Sentinel* permanently replaces a 5<sup>th</sup> level spell slot. Every five character levels, the sentinel may elect to replace another 5<sup>th</sup> level spell slot to select additional target. Only one *Eye* can be used at a time until additional spell slots are able to be sacrificed to facilitate a greater number of eyes and uses per day.

**Fire of the Sentinel (Ex):** This special ability adds a bonus of 1 to the DCs of Evocation spells cast by a sentinel. Fire of the Sentinel stacks with Epic Spell Focus (evocation), Greater Spell Focus (evocation), or Spell Focus (evocation).

**Glare of the Sentinel (Sp)** 1/day: This special ability requires the ability to call on the *Eye of the Sentinel*. This ability acts similarly to the *Eye* except the sentinel may cast spells through the *Glare* as if he were physically present. Spells do not have to be directed against or for the target. A sentinel may cast one spell in this manner for every two levels of sentinel attained; the *Glare* persists for one hour per the sentinel's class level. Casting in this manner requires a full round action and causes the sentinel's eyes to glow a fiery red. When spells are cast through the *Glare of the Sentinel*, a small, glaring red "eye" appears near the person upon whom the *Glare* was originally cast. The "eye" may be anywhere within 30 feet of the *Eye's* target as determined by the sentinel. This "eye" remains visible for one full round after a spell is cast through it, disappearing the next round. During the moments when the "eye" is visible, the sentinel can be targeted by spells, spell-like abilities or effects (area effects do not threaten the sentinel). Once all spells are cast through the *Glare*, it reverts to an *Eye* for the remainder of the duration. Reestablishing the *Glare* requires that the target is within 60 feet of the Sentinel. *Glare of the Sentinel* permanently re-

places a 6<sup>th</sup> level spell slot. Every six character levels, the sentinel may elect to replace another 6<sup>th</sup> level spell slot to cast another *Glare*. Only one *Glare* can be used at a time until additional spell slots are able to be sacrificed to facilitate a greater number of eyes and uses per day.

**Path of the Sentinel (Su):** This ability allows the sentinel to burn sixth level and higher spells into *greater teleport*. Unlike a normal *greater teleport*, the Path of the Sentinel allows the sentinel to carry one additional person up to 100 pounds plus 10 per the sentinel's character level.

**Sear of the Sentinel (Su):** This ability allows the sentinel to burn prepared spells, replacing them with arcane blasts. These blasts are standard action ranged touch attacks that deal 1d6 damage per class level plus 1d6 per level of spell burned; thus a *wall of fire* spell used to power a Sear of a 7<sup>th</sup> level wizard/7<sup>th</sup> level sentinel would deal 11d6 points of damage. There is no save and spell resistance does not apply, although the sentinel must succeed with a ranged touch attack to strike a foe. Sear of the Sentinel stacks with an arch-mage's arcane fire and other similar powers; spell level variables are only applied once in cases in which there are stacking options.

**Shell of the Sentinel (Sp) 1/day:** This spell-like ability allows the sentinel to protect any tiny to large target (including himself) against damage from any non-cosmic/divine source. The *Shell*, which manifests as a bubble-like orb, absorbs half of all damage caused by any kind of attack for as many rounds as the sentinel's class levels. *Shell of the Sentinel* permanently replaces a 7<sup>th</sup> level spell slot. The sentinel acquires an additional use of the *Shell* for every seven character levels earned so long as he's willing to sacrifice another 7<sup>th</sup> level spell slot.

**Spite of the Sentinel (Sp) 1/day:** This spell-like ability requires access to the *Shell of the Sentinel*. When *Shell of the Sentinel* is cast with *Spite of the Sentinel* in effect, the *Shell* absorbs half of the damage while the other half rebounds on the attacker. *Spite of the Sentinel* lasts for one round per sentinel level. *Spite of the Sentinel* permanently replaces an 8<sup>th</sup> level spell slot. The sentinel acquires an additional use of *Spite* for every eight character levels earned in return for another sacrificed 8<sup>th</sup> level spell slot.

**Study of the Sentinel (Ex):** Due to their concentration with Enchantment and Evocation magicks, Sentinels often do not spend as much time con-

centrating in all forms of The Word. When a Sentinel takes this special ability, he gains a +2 DC bonus to both his Enchantment and Evocation magic; this bonus stacks with Epic Spell Focus (enchantment), Epic Spell Focus (evocation), Fire of the Sentinel, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (evocation), and Tongue of the Sentinel. In return for this boost in Enchantment and Evocation magic, the DCs for all other schools from which a Sentinel casts are reduced by 1. The sentinel permanently replaces a 4<sup>th</sup> level spell slot for Study of the Sentinel.

**Tongue of the Sentinel (Ex):** This special ability adds a +1 bonus to the DCs of Enchantment spells cast by a sentinel. Tongue of the Sentinel stacks with Epic Spell Focus (enchantment), Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), or Spell Focus (enchantment).

**Word of the Sentinel (Sp)** Word of the Sentinel can either be used to cause the ears of adversaries to bleed or subvert the hard of heart to the will of the sentinel. In the former case, the sentinel can cause his voice to echo and boom, forcing those within 20 feet of the sentinel to be stunned for half as many rounds as the sentinel's character level; the effect may also affect materials within 20 feet, *shattering* them as the spell cast equal to the sentinel's character level. Conversely, the sentinel may use this ability as the spell *mass suggestion* cast in a manner equal to his character level. In either case, victims (and items if applicable) within the area of effect may make a Will save DC equal to the 10 + the sentinel's class level + the sentinel's Charisma bonus to avoid either effect; the DCs for either effect may be increased with a Spell Focus (evocation) (for the shattering voice), Spell Focus (enchantment) (for the suggesting voice) and similar feats, or with Fire of the Sentinel or Tongue of the Sentinel. Word of the Sentinel may be used once a day per every nine Sentinel levels possessed. *Word of the Sentinel* permanently replaces a 9<sup>th</sup> level spell slot.

**Epic Progression:** The sentinel prestige class does not allow for epic progression to attain access to more special abilities. However, the sentinel can sacrifice future spell slots to improve upon already selected abilities at a later date based upon additional character levels as explained in the descriptions above.



## Part IV: Magic Items and The Word

What about magic, then?" Mortex put in. "I know it's probably a dumb question, but something tells me that you've been waiting for someone to ask."

"It's not a 'dumb question' at all," Dentun answered, tucking the book under his arm, something – Mortex noted – that made Ibenez cringe. "It's a reasonable question, although I already answered it in part.

"No one was able to pierce the magic or mysteries of the *Cilidian*. There's a book in this library that recounts the attempts of both Anninarcus the Grim and Seeroth the Dark to do that very thing." Dentun looked off a bit, his face hardening. He lifted up the book and glared at it. "Not even two of Crin's Sacred could accomplish this. Not even at the greatest levels of The Word."

Volstaff said, "Sounds to me like some thing are better left unanswered." Mortex looked over at his fat friend. He believed he did a good job concealing his alarm; after all, the duke didn't know Volstaff, wouldn't have noticed the aggravated tone. This whole line of conversation was clearly getting to Volstaff the same way it was getting to him.

Korg sniffed. "I agree. We aren't gods."

Dentun's response somewhat atypical. He peered at Volstaff and Korg as if they were gnats that needed swatting. "Really? Then, to echo your learned friend here," he motioned to the uncomfortable Ibenez, "what's the point of all of this? What was the point of your journey into Worm's Wood to find this book? Why are you here asking me your little questions? Clearly, there are always answers and reasons to have those answers."

"Right," Mortex said, "But not everyone *needs* those answers. The legends about Sycolthor the Grand and... and T'Oth Maldran! Those were people who didn't need those any answers and even without them, gods know how many died."

Dentun shrugged, although it was difficult to say if he was dismissing Mortex's comments or not. "The Word is a powerful force. Those that would take the time to understand it are those who would seek out more knowledge. Those intel-

ligent and wise enough – and there is a difference – to speak it properly are deserving of what they acquire, what they learn."

He turned to Korg. "You say we are not gods. Seeroth the Dark and others would say that what makes a god different from a humen is a matter of degree."

"And what do you say?" Ibenez asked.

The odd smile returned. "I say that all are equal before *The Godspell* and that understanding of the *Cilidian* will lead one to *The Godspell*."

*The use of The Word has affected life in Midlorr countless times, but so too have other factors. The darkling metal of Burquebain has been forged into deadly weapons and weapons like the slasher and wing-bracer can be found only among the chirpto. Yet, to many, The Word still remains the greatest weapon in Drm and many of the continent-realms greatest speakers have crafted magic at the level of the gods.*

**Darkling Metal:** This rare metal is found only in the highest reaches of the Crown of Burquebain; some suspect it is not of this world. Darkling metal strongly resembles onyx covered in diamond dust, giving it a faint glimmering effect. Although not as hard as adamantine it is far lighter; additionally forged darkling metal can create incredibly sharp edges. However, the forging process requires masterwork attention. Thus, darkling metal weapons of the appropriate type have a +1 enhancement bonus on attack rolls. Piercing or slashing weapons made from darkling metal double their critical threat ranges; this benefit does not stack with the keen weapon enchantment but does stack with other critical threat enhancements. Non piercing or slashing weapons do not receive the enhanced critical bonus, but armor made from darkling metal finds functions one step lighter; thus plate armor functions as medium armor for determining arcane failure, Dexterity bonus to armor class, and skill check penalties. Armor weighs half as much as it otherwise should. Darkling metal has 35 hit points per inch of thickness and harness of 15.

**Slasher:** The slasher is a weapon designed for chirpto in mind, but can be adapted to fit other

flying creatures with leg or arm-like appendages. A slasher is similar to a light, metal leg-brace worn just above the ankles and extending to the bottom of the knee; it is often kept in place by leather belts that wrap around the shins to the calf muscles. A double-edged, serrated blade typically a foot to two feet in length is clasped in a simple leather sheath on the outside of the leg; with a simple twist, the blade can be partially ejected to extend  $\frac{3}{4}$  of its length. While releasing the holding mechanism for the blade is a free action, retracting the blade is a full round action. A slasher is considered an exotic weapon for all races save chirpto.

**Wing-Bracer:** A wingbracer is a weapon designed by the chirpto, but can be adapted to fit the wings of other flying creatures. A wingbracer is similar to a long gauntlet that is connected to a simple, leather chest harness. The gauntlet fits over the chirpto's two fingered hand and extends to the chest harness; the gauntlet fits over most of the chirpto's arms, but does not interfere with the wing membrane. By manipulating a spring mechanism on the gauntlet with its fingers, a chirpto can release two, serrated dagger-like blades. While in flight, the wing-bracer may be used only as a slashing weapon, while it may be a slashing or piercing weapon when the chirpto is on the ground. Although ejecting the blades is a free action, a move-equivalent action is required to retract them. A wing-bracer is considered an exotic weapon for all races save chirpto.

## CLERIC SPELLS

### 5<sup>TH</sup> – LEVEL CLERIC SPELLS

**Glow of the Full Moon:** Causes lunacy and may induce curse of lycanthropy.

### 8<sup>TH</sup> – LEVEL CLERIC SPELLS

**The Four Winds:** Chains emerge from the clouds to quarter victims to the four winds.

## EPIC SPELLS

70 **Delena's Verse From on High:** Causes damage to and banishes evil foes.

195 **Mammun's Burning the Book:** Reduces caster level to 0.

## SORCERER/WIZARD SPELLS

### 7<sup>TH</sup> – LEVEL SORCERER/WIZARD SPELLS

**Seeroth's Arcane Shield:** Stops 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> level spell effects while allowing mobility.

**Xyl's Arcane Leach:** Strips a spell from an arcane caster's mind.

### 9<sup>TH</sup> – LEVEL SORCERER/WIZARD SPELLS

**Sycolthor's Erase Word:** Removes available and prepared spells from the target.

#### **Delena's Verse From On High**

Banish, Energy [Sonic], Good

**Spellcraft DC:** 70

**Components:** DF, V, XP

**Casting Time:** 1 round

**Range:** Personal

**Area:** 40 ft. radius spread

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude half; Will negates.

**Spell Resistance:** See below

**To Develop:** 630,000 gp; 13 days; 25,200 XP.

Seed: banish (DC 27), energy (DC 19). Factor: change to

1 round casting time (+7 DC), no somatic components (+2 DC), increase area to 40 ft. radius, increase sonic damage to 20d6 (+10 DC). Mitigating factors: backlash damage 7d6 (-7 DC), burn 1000 XP (-10 XP), caster must be Chaotic Good, Lawful Good, or Neutral Good (-5 DC), limited to evil outsiders (-4 DC).

This spell calls on the harmony of the Realms Above to lay low denizens of the Depths Below. The caster sings a verse of holy liturgy of a good aligned god or cosmic entity. After a full round, the power of verse *from on high* manifests as angelic light floats down to engulf a 40 foot area centered on the caster and the verse is repeated by a celestial chorus. All evil outsiders in the area of effect immediately suffer 20d6 points of sonic damage as their souls are scorched by the holy verses; the evil outsiders receive a Fortitude saving throw for half damage if their spell resistance does not stave off the assault. After the damage is suffered, the fiends must make a Will saving throw or else be banished back to their plane of origin; spell resistance does not function against this aspect of the spell. If the caster is a cleric, the spell's DCs increase by 2; if the caster is a patron of a good-aligned power, the spell's DCs increase by 2; if the caster is a cleric of a good-aligned power, the spell's DCs increase by 4 (these bonuses do not stack).

XP Cost: 1,000 XP

*Delena of Bainland was one of the Seekers of Righteousness, the unlikely heroes that found the sword Edifier, defeated T'Oth Maldran, and ended the Demon Wars. During their arduous quest, Delena was blessed by her goddess, Nemaria, with the ability to touch even the darkest hearts of Creation: fiends. Unable to withstand the soothing grace of holiness, fiends fell before Delena. These trials prepared Delena for the group's confrontation with the lich, T'Oth Maldran. While other Seekers quickly fell before Maldran, Delena withstood his strongest attacks. In a cascade of heavenly light, Delena unleashed the full power of light against the Foe, even as he was run through with Edifier. Delana's mortal body could not survive the righteousness that flowed through it; as her body died, Delena apotheosized into an angel. She left behind her love, Crin the Sacred, and a few other members of the Seekers to continue the quest to end the Demon Wars, guiding them through dreams and visions until the fiends were banished.*

### **The Four Winds**

Conjuration (Creation)

**Level:** Air 9, Clr 8

**Components:** S, M, DF

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** See below

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

The *four winds* allow the caster to call on the four cardinal direction to quarter a selected target. The *four winds* manifest as huge hooks at the end of barbed chains that descend from the sky. The caster must succeed in a ranged touch attack to strike the target with each wind separately. Each successful attack deals 2d4 points of cumulative piercing damage. As each wind successfully finds its mark (often the hands and feet of humanoid creatures), avoiding additional strikes becomes increasingly difficult. After the first wind hits, the target receives a -2 circumstance penalty to his armor class; if two winds strike, the target loses his Dexterity bonus (if any) and suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to his armor class; if three winds strike, the target loses his Dexterity bonus (if any) and suffers a -4 circumstance penalty to his armor class. If all four winds strike, the victim is immediately quartered, his body parts scattered across a diameter of 800 feet from the point of his death. There is no save to avoid this

fate. Items on the target's body are likewise scattered, although items on the torso have a 50% chance of remaining in the general vicinity of where the target was killed.

Creatures greater than the Large size category receive a Fortitude saving throw against being quartered; such targets add their size modifier as a bonus to these saves. Creatures smaller than the Small size category cannot be quartered, although they can still be targeted by the winds.

If used in a windy or stormy environment (winds of 20 mph or greater), the *four winds* damages increases by one die and the penalties to armor class are doubled.

*The Demon Prince of Winds, Cabernasus, is believed to be the author of this vile spell. His clerics have made the spell their signature and the most powerful members of his clergy eagerly use the four winds to scatter the remains of hated rivals and infidels. However, other gods such as Aurlarist, Mastrum, and Stakarath have adopted the spell, although – with the exception of Mastrum – their servants are far less likely to use it.*

### **Glow of the Full Moon**

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

**Level:** Clr 5

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Targets:** One or more humanoids or humanoid shapechangers, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

**Duration:** 1 round/level (D)

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

*Glow of the full moon* allows the caster to exude an aura of light identical to that of the full moon. All within range that fail the saving throw are struck with lunacy. In addition to the effects of *confusion*, the victims also *rage* for the duration of the spell. Shapechanging humanoids suffer additional maladies under the *glow of the full moon*. Lycanthropes that fail the save are forced to assume their animal form while creatures like dopelgangers are forced to assume their natural forms; in either and similar cases, those affected by the *glow* still suffer from *confusion* and *rage* and regain their senses once the duration ends. Although the *glow of the full moon* provides illumination akin to that of a hooded lantern, it does not

dispel *darkness* and similar magic effects. Certain clerics have been known to take on different tints during the glow of the full moon; clerics of Ausarii often glow a soothing silver, worshippers of Churabus generally glow like the moon, and cultists of Ostensis glow a brooding red.

*Glow of the full moon is a spell first thought to have been used by chirpto worshippers of Churabus, the Lady of the Night; however, it is best known as a tool for the servants of Ostensis, the Demon Queen. It is rarely used by clerics of Ausarii, who find its effects unsettling and inappropriate in all but the most dire circumstances.*

### **Mammun's Burning the Book**

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

**Spellcraft DC:** 195

**Components:** M

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** 75 ft.

**Target:** One living creature

**Duration:** Permanent

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

**To Develop:** 1,755,000 gp; 35 days,; 70,200 XP.  
**Seed:** *compel* (DC 19). Factors: unreasonable action (+10), no somatic or verbal components (+4 DC), 1 action casting time (+20 DC), permanent duration (x5 DC).

The target is compelled to forget how to cast magic. On a failed save, the target immediately loses all of its magical abilities. For a mortal or another creature not inherently magical, she is treated as if she were a 0-level caster; she would retain her base attack bonus, saving throws, skills, and feats, but would no longer be able to cast any spells. A creature that can cast spells or spell-like abilities, like a dragon, would likewise continue to function in every other way other than being able to use magic. While mortals afflicted by this powerful enchantment may relearn magic at first level, other creatures may not. A mortal relearning magic must progress as he total character level; thus, a 20<sup>th</sup> level character afflicted by *Mammun's burning the book* seeking to once again cast first level spells would need to earn 210,000 XP. It is believed that the forbidden magic *heart's desire* will return a caster's spell-casting ability, although at a steep price. It is known that gods of knowledge, magic, or wisdom have the ability to restore magical abilities lost to this spell. There are persistent rumors that *Mam-*

*mun's burning the book* is actually a lesser version of a far more dangerous spell that Mammun alone could cast...

**Material Component:** A spellbook with spells from 1<sup>st</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> level and containing at least nine 9<sup>th</sup> level spells.

*Without doubt the greatest wizard in Drm history and probably the most powerful mortal as well, Mammun the Maker was without equal. He defeated the cosmic dragon Tasler Mori in single combat, binding the great beast and casting him to the bottom of the Endless Chasm. He overcame the dragons and other aulspawn of the Agrabathor Jungle, allowing the Excavation of Yahlilli. He defeated the Queen of Dragons, Tiamat, and banished her back into Perdition. No one knows what became of Mammun as he disappeared before the end of the Age of Greatness while traveling the Desolate South. Even less is known of the great powers he exhibited during his life. To this day, sorcerers and wizards search for hidden spellbooks or personal magic items to no avail. Whatever Mammun was, he was certainly jealous of his power and likely destroyed most records once he accomplished a goal. Mammun's burning the book is one of the few spells Mammun created that has been uncovered.*

### **Seeroth's Arcane Shield**

Abjuration

**Level:** Sor/Wiz 7

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Personal

**Duration:** 1 round/level (D) or until discharged

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

The caster becomes aglow with flowing energy (the color of which may be of the caster's choosing). While encased in this aura, the caster is resistant to magical effects up to 5<sup>th</sup> level that target him or in which he is in the area of effect for the duration or until the spell is discharged. *Seeroth's arcane shield* grants the caster defense against five spell levels per the caster's level (up to 20<sup>th</sup> level). It is effective against the level of a prepared spell, not the a spell's base level; i.e., a maximized *fireball*, which functions as a 6<sup>th</sup> level spell, would not be stopped by *Seeroth's arcane shield*. Each spell or spell-like effect that strikes *Seeroth's arcane shield* reduces the *shield's* efficacy by the appropriate level. For example, a 14<sup>th</sup>

level wizard would create an *arcane shield* that could defend the caster against 70 total spell levels during the duration; if he was in within the radius of a *fireball*, his arcane shield would protect him against the damage, but would be reduced to 63 spell levels worth of protection.

*Seeroth's arcane shield* moves with the caster; it does not hinder his own spellcasting abilities. Spells, spell-like effects, and so forth already functioning on the caster's person continue to function and cannot be dismissed by the caster without first dismissing *Seeroth's arcane shield*. Thus, if a caster benefiting from *stoneskin* casts *Seeroth's arcane shield*, he will continue to be protected by the spell until its benefits are used up or its duration expires; if a caster was suffering from *confusion* and casts *Seeroth's arcane shield*, he will continue to be insane until the duration expires or the effect is dispelled (requiring that the dispelling attempt bypasses the *arcane shield*).

*Often called the Last Emperor of Vhendimmoth, Seeroth the Dark is the best known wizard in Drm history and one of the best known legendary figures. The nephew of Sycolthor the Grand and the star pupil of Crin the Sacred, it could be said that Seeroth could not help but succeed in becoming a renown, and some say infamous, wizard. The Last Emperor was a leading force in the Noon Alliance in The Darkhold against the Forbidden Orders. Seeroth the Dark was personally responsible for the obliteration of T'Oth Maldran, thus ending the Great War. One of the few Heroes of Noon known to have survived The Darkhold, Seeroth disappeared in the Wynding River Valley. Few believe he is dead; indeed, some believe that he may still be very involved in Drm, manipulating events as he was prone to do in the distant past...*

### **Sycolthor's Erase Word**

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

**Level:** Sor/Wiz 9

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 round

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Will save negates

**Spell Resistance:** No

The caster targets a single spellcaster, requiring the target to make a series of Will saving throws. If the target fails the applicable save, he loses access to all prepared or available spells of the

appropriate level. The nature of the saves depends upon the spell levels the target has available. The target must make saves for each available spell level. The target applies no penalty to saves for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> level spells; -2 penalty to saves for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> level spells; -4 penalty for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> level spells; and a -6 penalty for 9<sup>th</sup> level spells. The target cannot prepare or access spell levels lost for the next 24 hours plus 1 hour per level of the caster over 18<sup>th</sup> level. The target that loses spell access behaves as if he had expended the spells on his own; he may regain the spells as per normal once the duration expires (study, sleep, prayer, etc.).

**Material Component:** The ashes of a book that are sprinkled before the caster as he utters the incantation.

*One of the greatest wizards in Drm, the infamous Sycolthor the Grand is better known for his misguided actions as the doomed emperor of Vhendimmoth than with his skill as an arcane spellcaster. Sycolthor improved upon existing spells of other casters and designed his own. While most of these spells are lost to history, some were learned by his nephew, Seeroth the Dark. Unfortunately for Sycolthor, all of his talent could not bring him his ultimate desire: The Godspell.*

### **Xyl's Arcane Leach**

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

**Level:** Sor/Wiz 7

**Components:** S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Will save negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

If the target creature fails a Will saving throw, it telepathically relays to the caster all of the spells he has memorized or available. The caster may then select any spell from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> level from the target's mind and add it to his prepared or available spells. The target behaves as if he used the spell for that day; the target can regain leached spells as per normal. *Xyl's arcane leach's* caster may exceed his spell availability with the spell he has stolen for 1 hour per the stolen spell's level. He must be able to cast the stolen spell, i.e. the stolen spell must be arcane and the caster must have access to any applicable material compo-

nents. Furthermore, the caster may not leach spells that are modified by metamagic feats. *Arcane leach* may be used on beings with access to spell-like abilities; beings with access to spells that can be cast more than once a day lose access to the stolen spell for an hour or until the caster of *Xyl's arcane leach* casts the stolen spell. In all cases, the beneficiary of *Xyl's arcane leach* may use a stolen spell only once; i.e. if a caster of *Xyl's arcane leach* stole a *fireball* spell from a pit fiend, which can cast *fireball* as a spell-like ability at will, he would only be able to use the *fireball* one time within that hour long period.

**Material Component:** A sheet of parchment or paper with words written across at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the surface. The caster eats the paper as he casts the spell.

*There was not a more ruthless or fell wizard in the north than Xyl. He was so cold that he was known as The Heartless. Xyl the Heartless believed that he was the greatest wizard of Drm and that all, especially the foolish Ash of Ashtur, would accept this fact. To prove his superiority, he honed his arcane power to strip "lesser" wizards of their own spells. He bred his own family to be great wizards, requiring brothers to marry sisters and mothers to carry the seed of their sons, all in the effort to ensure that those with the greatest arcane talent could pass that talent on. Thus, Xyl became the father of the Magistrates, some of the most evil Speakers of the Word in Drm.*

## MAGIC ITEMS

**Bythal Bow:** Also known as the Bow of Revenge and the Bow of Wrath and Woe, most *Bythal bows* are forged by worshippers of Bythal Dalax. *Bythal bows* are small composite bows (+2 Str bonus) without draw strings, making traditional arrows useless; instead, they generate "arrows" from the anger and malice of the wielder. The shafts can be made from any supple wood and are usually shaped in a form similar to that of a serpent.

These bows are used as tests for those who are not entirely certain of their desire for revenge, making those who are not completely consumed by spite and malice to make a difficult choice to pursue their revenge. The target must always be a certain person or member of the race that the wielder has sworn to kill. The bow may be used three times per day, the magic arrows generating when the string is drawn. In the hands of Evil users, the *Bythal bow* generates a +1 *seeking greater arrow of slaying* with a Fortitude DC 21 to

avoid the death effect. When used by Neutral or Good wielders, the bow generates an arrow that blossoms into *flame strike* cast at 9<sup>th</sup> level with regards to variable conditions; the Reflex DC is 21.

Moderate necromancy; CL 9<sup>th</sup> ; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *detect evil*, *flame strike*, heightened *slay living*, creator must be a worshipper of Bythal Dalax; Price 30,525 gp; Cost 15,525 + 1220 XP.

**Ring of Teleportation:** Among the most sought after rings in Drm are *rings of teleportation*. A *ring of teleportation* is usually created with a non-descript ring, often nickel or copper; often the only indication that a ring is magical is the slight shimmering effect right before the ring is used. A *ring of teleportation* may be used up to three times in a 24 hour period, but otherwise has limitless uses.

Strong conjuration; CL 13<sup>th</sup>; Forge Ring, *greater teleportation*; Price 110,000 gp; Cost 50,000 + 4400 XP.

**Gorget of Lives:** This elaborate piece of armor covers the throat of the person it and can be adapted to fit any armor even serve the needs of one without armor. It appears to provide no additional defense until the wearer is struck dead. A *gorget of lives* cast *true resurrection* three times as the spell cast at 20<sup>th</sup> level. The wearer need do nothing to benefit from the effect; as soon as he dies, the *gorget's* magic takes effect. Once all three *true resurrections* are used, the *gorget* is a normal piece of well crafted, but otherwise useless, armor.

Strong conjuration; CL 20<sup>th</sup>; Craft Wondrous Item, *true resurrection*; Price 200,000; Cost 125,000 + 8,000 XP.

## Minor Artifacts

**Hell Staff:** A *hell staff* appears as a single shaft of charred iron pocked with red-hot Infernal runes; while the base of the staff is shod in gold, the head typically has some variation of a Hell's Mouth or a fallen angel depending on the desire for whom the staff was made. The wielder of a *hell staff* acquires great power:

The following powers are in constant effect while the *hell staff* is held:

The wielder can see in darkness, even that of a *deeper darkness* spell.

The wielder gains fire immunity and acid or cold resistance 10 (once one is chose, the selection is permanent).

The wielder benefits from *mind-blank* as the spell cast at 20<sup>th</sup> level.

The wielder is partially immune to spells bearing the evil or lawful descriptors, suffering only one-half of the damage from such spells. If a single spell possesses both qualities or else is cast by a Lawful Evil caster, the wielder suffers no damage on a successful save and half damage on a failed save.

The wielder suffers double damage from spells bearing the good or chaotic descriptors on a failed save. If a single spell possesses both qualities or else is cast by a Chaotic Good caster, the wielder suffers quadruple damage on a failed save and double damage on a successful save.

The following powers may be used as a standard action and do not use charges.

Enlarged *desecrate*

*Detect Good*

*Fireball*

*Magic Circle Against Good*

*Summon Monster I – V* (Lawful Evil monsters only)

The following powers may be used as a standard action and use 1 charge:

Heightened *blasphemy* (9<sup>th</sup> level)

*Persistent Image*

*Summon Monster VI – IX* (Lawful Evil monsters only)

*Unholy Aura*

The following power may be used as a standard action once per month and use 2 charges:

*Planar Ally* a greater devil (barregon, cornugon, or gelugon)

*Plane Shift* another (only functions on another and casts the victim in the Kingdom of the Chosen)

Widened *unhallow*

The following power may be used as a full round

action once every three months and uses 5 charges:

Gate a pit fiend

Once a year, the wielder of a hell staff may request a *wish*.

A *hell staff* may be recharged only by trapping the soul of others. As a full round action, the user may attempt to *trap the soul* as a 20<sup>th</sup> level caster. Success provides the staff with 1 charge for every three levels possessed by the trapped soul. The trapped soul suffers a level drain for every 24 hour period inside the staff; once the victim's soul is consumed, he is sent into the Kingdom of the Chosen, Dauth Alman's realm in Hell. However, if the caster ever overloads the staff with trapped souls, attempts to *plane shifts* another into Hell, or summons a greater devil or pit fiend with the staff, the wielder must make a Will saving throw (equal to the total number of trapped souls beyond 50, 17 + the caster's Charisma for the *plane shift*, or 5 + the CR of the summoned monster). If the wielder ever fails, the staff *plane shifts* into Hell with the wielder in tow; there is no save to avoid this fate. At this point, any *summoned* or *called* devils are returned to Hell as well.

A *hell staff* may only be used by a Lawful Evil wielder.

Strong (all schools); CL 20<sup>th</sup>; Weight 5 lb.

*More commonly referred to as "Scepters of Perdition," hell staffs were once forged for the highest level servants of the Dark Sovereign, Dauth Alman. Reputedly, hell staffs were given to a Dark Redeemer – the continent-realm-wide leaders of his dark church – as he came to power. Most of these leaders did not die natural deaths; instead, they eventually disappeared, their bodies physically transported by their prized staffs into Hell. Most scholars believe that hell staffs were forged in Branedeth Horde, the assumed center of Dauth Alman worship in the past (some were possibly forged by Branedeth himself). Since the end of the Dragonhold, there has not been a sighting of a hell staff much less a single Dark Redeemer, so many assume that they are no longer created. Of course, to make such an assumption may be a foolish venture for Dauth Alman and his servants are masters of intrigue and plotting.*

**Silver Gauntlet:** A *silver gauntlet* is forged to resemble the gauntlet of a plate armor; however, it weighs as much as a heavy glove and is far more elaborate in design as it's inlaid with silver and platinum. It always fits the hand of a small, medium, or large Lawful Good or Neutral Good wielder, although there are rumors that even larger gauntlets have been created. The powers of a *silver gauntlet* are as follows:

When used in combat, the *silver gauntlet* allows the wielder to behave as though she were of a monk of the appropriate character level; i.e. a 20<sup>th</sup> level fighter using a *silver gauntlet* would strike as +15/+15/+15/+10/+5 and 2d10 points of damage. A *silver gauntlet* strikes as an axiomatic, holy, silver weapon, dealing + 2d6 (axiomatic) + 2d6 (holy) damage on a successful hit in addition to its normal damage.

A *silver gauntlet* can smite evil 3/day as the paladin ability, allowing the wielder to add her Charisma bonus to her attack rolls and deal an extra 1 point of damage per character level; this ability stacks with that of smite evil from other sources like that of the paladin class. 1/day, a *silver gauntlet* can *holy smite* as the spell cast at 20<sup>th</sup> level. 1/week, the wielder can also *consecrate* and call on a quickened *holy aura*. Finally, 1/month, the wielder can cast *hallow*. In all cases, the wielder only needs to wave her hand to case the effect.

The power of a *silver gauntlet* is such that the forces of evil and misery cower in the presence of wielder. Lawful Evil foes suffer -2 to initiative and saving throws if within 10 feet of the wielder. Neutral Evil foes and all non – Chaotic Evil outsiders become shaken if they fail a Will save DC = 10 + ½ the wielder's level + the wielder's Cha. Chaotic Evil foes and all evil undead must succeed in the same save or become panicked.

Strong (conjunction, enchantment, evocation); CL 20<sup>th</sup>; Weight 2 lb.

Also known as the “Warding Hands,” *silver gauntlets* are ancient weapons forged in Havenspeak during the Age of Greatness. Although no one knows what prompted the forging of these weapons, they were used by wandering clerics, fighters, and paladins to defend against the predations of *duruban* and *hobgoblins*. Eventually, when *Curoboria* took control of much of the *Vast Expanse*, most of these items were destroyed or lost, although it is known that *Prymon Gladsheer*, the hero of the *Creeping Darkness*, wielded one. It

is also rumored that *Delana of Bainland*, one of the *Seekers of Righteousness* during the *Demon Wars*, used one. Their power was such that many evil churches commissioned them being tracked down and destroyed. It is commonly believed that there are only seven of these weapons left.

## Major Artifacts

**The Sphere of Power:** The *Sphere of Power* is often thought of as the most accessible of the Seven Spheres. With the power to increase physical strength and stamina, the *Sphere of Power* is typically sought by those that fight with weapons and rely on their physique more than other attributes. However, the *Sphere of Power* is arguably more beneficial to lacking in qualities carnal.

Unless otherwise noted, the *Sphere of Power's* abilities are considered to be extraordinary.

### Constant Effects

The *Sphere of Power* calls to the hearts and minds of those within 20 feet of its presence whether it is being carried or worn. All those within 20 feet of the Sphere receive a Will save. Success indicates that the being receives a +4 bonus to Strength and Strength-based checks for 24 hours. Furthermore, the beneficiary can sense the presence of the Sphere, although he will not be able to articulate the feeling. While the beneficiary will not become hostile or aggressive, he will be inclined to follow the “owner” in order to discern what has caught his attention.

The wielder of the Sphere receives a +7 enhancement bonus to Strength for as long as he is the “owner”. Should the wielder go up in level and increase the Strength ability score, the wielder increase his Strength 2 points rather than the customary 1 point. This increase is permanent and is not removed even if the Sphere gains a new owner.

### Progressive Powers in the Inactive State

The progressive powers of the *Sphere of Power* are connected to the overall power possessed by the wielder. Those with great “spiritual” power, whether inherent or gained through experience, can attain acquire even greater power from the *Sphere of Power*. It is unknown if the progressive powers of the *Sphere of Power* increase or change if the Sphere is activated, although most sages suspect that such would be the case. It is surmised, although not known for a certainty, that



even gods can be affected by the curses associated with the *Sphere of Power*. The Sphere has a divine rank of 20 for the purpose of affecting gods with its power.

*Great prowess (1<sup>st</sup> level wielder)*: The wielder increases his load capacity x2. Every 7<sup>th</sup> level the multiplier increases by 1 to a maximum of x7.

*Empower Strength (3<sup>rd</sup> level wielder)*: 1/day, the wielder can add a value up to the wielder's character level to his Strength score for 1 round. At 7<sup>th</sup> level and every 7 levels thereafter, the wielder can empower his Strength an additional time per day to a maximum of 7/day. Furthermore, at 7<sup>th</sup> level and every seven levels thereafter, the empowerment lasts an additional round to a maximum of 7 rounds. Each use of empower Strength imposes a cumulative -1 penalty for 24 hours on saves against adverse effects associated with use of the Sphere's other powers.

*Increased Density (4<sup>th</sup> level wielder)*: The wielder is treated as one size category larger for the purposes of base weapon's damage, natural weapon damage, Bull Rush attacks, Grapple checks, and Trip attacks. The wielder benefits from an additional size increase again at 11<sup>th</sup> level and every 7<sup>th</sup> level there until he reaches Colossal +.

*Mighty Strike (7<sup>th</sup> level wielder)*: 1/day, the wielder can increase the damage dealt by a successful melee attack by 1d6. The additional damage increases by 1d6 for every 7 levels the wielder possesses beyond 7<sup>th</sup>, while the frequency increases 1/day for every four levels the wielder possesses. Mighty strike requires a save against Overpower adverse effects. Success indicates that the wielder only suffers 1 point of Constitution damage until he receives rest without using this power for 24 consecutive hours.

*Crushing Blow (10<sup>th</sup> level wielder)*: 1/day, the wielder can wear down a foe with a successful melee strike. The struck foe must succeed on a Fortitude save with a DC equal to 10 + damage dealt. Failure indicates that the foe is exhausted while success indicates that the foe is simply fatigued for 7 rounds. Foes not vulnerable to exhaustion or fatigue (like constructs and undead) take double the original damage on a failed save; such creatures suffer no effect with a successful save. The frequency to perform a crushing blow increases 1/day every level the wielder possesses beyond 10<sup>th</sup> to a maximum of 7/day. Crushing blow requires a save against Overpower adverse effects. Success indicates that the wielder only

suffers 2 points of Constitution damage. Major curse.

*Staggering Blow (14<sup>th</sup> level wielder)*: 1/day, the wielder may send a foe flying with a successful strike. The foe struck is moved away from the wielder a distance of 10 ft. per level differential (to a minimum of 10 feet) and is considered prone. A successful Fortitude save equal to damage dealt is required for the victim to get up from prone; the victim gains a +1 cumulative bonus every round he attempts the save. The frequency to perform a staggering blow increases 1/day for every level the wielder possesses beyond 14<sup>th</sup> to a maximum of 7/day. Staggering blow requires a save against Overpower adverse effects. Success indicates that the wielder only suffers 3 points of Constitution damage. Severe curse.

*Devastating Blow (17<sup>th</sup> level wielder)*: 1/day, the wielder may destroy a foe with a successful melee strike. A devastating blow deals 3d6 points of damage to a victim's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. Creatures immune to the ability score damage for any reason take the 3d6 damage as regular damage (e.g. an undead creature would suffer 9d6 points of additional damage). Any armor worn by the struck creature takes damage from the attack as if it were a shield that had been subjected to a successful Sunder. The frequency to perform a devastating blow increases 1/day for every three level the wielder possesses beyond 17<sup>th</sup> to a maximum of 7/day. Devastating blow requires a save against Overpower adverse effects. Success indicates that the wielder only suffers 5 points of Constitution damage. Severe curse.

### Overpower Effects

Every time the *Sphere of Power* is used for a mighty strike or greater function, the "owner" must succeed in a Fortitude save. In the event that the save is successful, the "owner" only suffers Constitution damage as use of the Sphere is extremely taxing on the mortal body. However, if the "owner" fails, there are severe consequences in addition to greater Constitution damage depending up on the power used. In addition, while the negative effects caused by the Sphere may not be undone with healing spells; only natural rest and recuperation may restore damage.

*All Powers*: Any time the Sphere is used, all that would be affected by the divine infection may also find that they gain a temporary degree of Strength

to the point of detriment. All within 70 feet of the Sphere must make a Fortitude saving throw; failure indicates that they gain a +7 bonus to their Strength modifier for the next 7 hours. Any check requiring finesse or care is sabotaged due to their might, and they may deal damage to beings they do not intend to as a result of their empowered status. (i.e. a simple hug may turn into a subdual damage dealing grapple, a knock on a door may become a Strength check to break it down, etc.) They apply their enhanced Strength modifier as a penalty to all rolls involving another ability score (ranged attack rolls, Wisdom checks, Reflex saves, etc.).

*Mighty Strike:* If a save is failed in the use of mighty strike, the “owner” immediately deals his weapon (or himself if using a natural weapon) the amount of damage the attack dealt. The owner also takes 1d4 points of Constitution damage (the Con damage is applied first in the case that the owner is damaging himself).

*Crushing Blow:* If a save is failed in the use of crushing blow, the owner is immediately exhausted for 7 minutes. He also takes 2d4 points of Constitution damage

*Staggering Blow:* If a save is failed in the use of staggering blow, the “owner” immediately deals himself the amount of damage the attack dealt and knocks himself prone. The owner also takes 3d4 points of Constitution damage.

*Devastating Blow:* If a save is failed in the use of devastating blow, the “owner” suffers 7 negative levels and 5d4 points of Constitution damage. The negative levels persist for 24 hours, after which they are removed naturally at a rate of 1 per day.

Any save that is failed by 7 points or more changes the Constitution damage into permanent drain.

## Part V: The Continent Realm of Drm

O kay,” Mortex said sitting forward, “so, you’re saying that all of what we’ve seen so far is nothing compared to what’s out there.” He wanted to get the subject away from *The Godspell*; the last thing they needed was Korg – who looked ready to chew the bark off a tree – saying something they would all regret.

Dentun offered the young man an indulging smile. “Indeed. You simply lean against the bottom of a very tall, very deeply rooted tree. You can scarcely see the top and have no idea what lies beneath the surface.”

Mortex rolled his eyes at the colorful language, but persisted. “Nice. But what else is out there? I know all about the Ministry. I’m from Bainland, I’ve traveled through Valdeze and Worm’s Wood. Now, we’re thinking of heading into Man – ouch!” Mortex glared at Marta who glared back at him as she struggled to right herself in her chair. Mortex

continued, forcing himself not to rub his throbbing foot. “Anyway, it seems like there’s a lot out there. More places to discover and secrets to uncover.”

“There are, young Mortex,” the duke answered, apparently unaware of Marta’s exchange with the young warrior, much less his comments. “The Wynding River. The Golden Plains. The Eternal Forest. The Deep Sea. These are just a few of the places in which the history that led to your birth and your rediscovery of this *Cilidian* has been written. But what of the Froden Norv, a land of blizzards? Or the Great Kharsis Desert where empires as great as the Kingdom of Bainland rule. What do you know of the Merchants of Kharsis or the Dracon cult?” Dentun paused and looked away wistfully. “What of the Desolate South where the greatest empire, Vhendimmoth, once reigned over all that is great in Drm” He looked at each Cleansing Fist member in turn, his face suddenly stern, almost disdainful. “You know nothing

**THE CONTINENT-REALM OF DRM:** *The phrase “Lands Under the Crown and in the Chain” (“Lands Under the Crown” for short) refers to locations south of the mountain range called the Crown of Burquebain, east of the sister range known as the Chain of Burquebain, west of the Ash Mountains, and north of the Vhythalimos Sea. Most of recorded Drmian history has revolved around this region. Relatively little is known about the lands beyond the Crown of the north, west of the Chain, and south of the churning waters of Vhythalimos. The dwarves of Burquebain have kept their attentions to their neighbors and enemies in the south and, to the knowledge of historians, they have rarely ventured into Froden Norv. Due to trade between lands in the Great Kharsis Desert with Ashtur, not to mention the recent incursions of clandestine Merchants of Kharsis, the lands west of the Chain of Burquebain, particularly the northeast regions of the Desert, are moderately known and steeped in a great mystery and lore that has yet to be verified by even the sages of Mandl. In this area are the great and fabled lands of Klm and Nsm; trade between these lands and the Lands Under the Crown has proven profitable for both sides. Still, what lies in the Great Kharsis Desert and beyond is largely unknown to most people of Klm and unfathomable to those Under the Crown. Likewise, in the Desolate South very little beyond the city of Tetholas has been revealed. Although there is greater and greater trade between the Lands Under the Chain and the people of the Desolate South, many who have attempted to breach the darkness of Bleakwood have yet to return.*

*The list that follows highlights the greatest nations and locations Under the Crown. Most of these areas are known by the dominant geographical structure, usually mountains, hills, forests, rivers, and valleys. Despite the distance between the Burquebain in the far north and Evelyn’s Port in the far south, most people in the Twelfth Age are at least marginally aware of the names of these locations. The dominant race is also notated (kin will not be found on the list since they are nomadic in nature).*

**Table 5 – 1: Location ELs**



The following is a brief description of traditional terrain types and average encounter levels for certain areas in the continent-realm of Drm. This material does not describe the locations in detail (that is for later texts), but provides enough information for DMs to start a campaign in the Lands Under the Crown.

**Agrabathor Jungles EL 15:** Warm Forests, Warm Hills, Warm Marshes, and Warm Mountains. Aberrations, elementals, magical beasts, monstrous humanoids, and undead are prevalent.

**Crown of Burquebain EL 10:** Cold Forest, Cold Hills, Cold Mountain.

**The Deep Sea EL 5:** Cold Aquatic, Cold Hills, Cold Plains, Temperate Aquatic, Temperate Hills, Temperate Plains.

**The Eternal Forest EL 10:** Temperate Forest. Very dense with sylvan creatures, particularly couatl, pegasi, and unicorns.

**The Gilded Path EL 8:** Temperate Hills. The Gilded Path is relatively dense with elementals, fey, magical beasts, and outsiders.

**The Golden Plains EL 12:** Warm Hills, Warm Plains. A “traditional” savannah with plenty of magical beasts and monstrous humanoids, and a fair number of elementals and aberrations.

**Vast Expanse EL 10:** Temperate Desert, Temperate Plains, Warm Plains.

**Vhythalimos Sea EL 18:** Warm Aquatic. Aberrations and magical beasts populate the area.

**Worm’s Wood EL 9:** Temperate Forest, Warm Forest. Aberrations, magical beasts, monstrous humanoids, outsiders, and undead are prevalent.

**Wynding River Valley EL 6:** Temperate Forest. The Wynding River Valley has few magical beasts and very few fey creatures.

### **The Crown of Burquebain**

#### ***The Kingdoms of K’Rystas (elves)***

*Capital: The Exalted Forest*

*Important Locations: Caverns of the Blue Sky, the Crystal Forest, Diamond Springs, the Exalted Forest, Runless River, Sorrow of Sh’urtur, Stairs to Heaven*

*Coat of Arms: Three stylized, white crystals on a blue field (associated for the High King of K’Rystas rather than the Kingdoms themselves).*

One of the oldest of the various elven homelands in Drm, the Kingdoms of K’Rystas consist of the northernmost such land for the Fair People. Comprised of at least a score of different elven clans, K’Rystas dominates the western portions of the Crown of Burquebain, particularly the river valleys and lower portions of the forested mountains. There are few permanent settlements, although The Exalted Forest, the permanent home of the High King of K’Rystas, is considered one of the most beautiful places in Drm.

The first K’Rystas elves arrived in the Crown of Burquebain sometime early in the Age of Mist. It is unclear if they preceded or came after the dwarves that would eventually dominate the mountain range, but while the dwarves settled inside the mountains, the elves took the forested portions along the mountain-floor and portions of the mountainous exteriors. The surest way to know that one’s in K’Rystas territory is to look for the crystal-like *tydyct*, or “truth trees,” which only grow in K’Rystas land (although there are a few in Ashtur, given by the elves as gifts). There are literally hundreds of settlements, *thorps*, and hamlets throughout the K’Rystas territory. Most of these exist for short periods of time, perhaps half a century, before the elves relocate. There are numerous princes, queens, and kings in many of these settlements who find their rule limited in scope. All of K’Rystas, however, bows to the majesty of the High King. Outside of the High King, K’Rystas has little in the way of a unified government. Taxes are nominal and there is no kingdom-wide trade effort. Still, K’Rystas is best known for its crystals, diamonds, medicines, and herbs.

The line of the High King is not known to most outsiders, although it is believed that the progenitor of the line was the father of the legendary half-elven bard and warrior, Zalphan. The High King and his Court (called the Crystal Court by all but the elves) are powerful wardens of the forests across the Crown of Burquebain. From his city in the Exalted Forest, the High King issues very few commands or decrees to his subjects, content to let them live their lives so long as they do not descend into evil. Members of the Crystal Court regularly travel across K'Rystas, gathering news from and sharing news with the various little kingdoms. Alongside the Crystal Court, the Children of the Forest, the unified priesthood of elves, connect K'Rystas as a whole.

Although Talamas is the chief god of Elves, K'Rystas favors another elven god: Sorilam, the goddess of diamond tears. Most Children of the Forest are her clerics, although there are a fair number of other religions. If there is any regular social tension within K'Rystas as a whole, it lies between those who worship Sorilam and those who worship Talamas. While Talamas encourages freedom with good intent, Sorilam encourages restraint and grace. K'Rystas is regularly teetering on equilibrium between these two groups.

Of all the elven Families, the K'Rystas are the most isolated. K'Rystas is almost completely homogenous, although there are some half-elves and the occasional chirpto or sapien visitor. Due to the influence of Sorilam worship, the K'Rystas tend to come across as extremely aloof and rarely exhibit the frivolous attitude common with southern elves. Still, they are whimsical and mutable like all elves. Generally speaking, K'Rystas views Ashtur, Burquebain, and Irprethe as allies while the rest of the Crown of Burquebain is ignored or dealt with extreme caution. K'Rystas regularly keeps in touch with southern elves save those of L'Istona and Z'Ythral.

***The Thanes' Republic of Burquebain (dwarves)***

*Capital: The Burning Crown of Cliver*

*Key Locations: Burning Crown of Cliver, The Endless Chasm, Sky's Eye Peak, Steel Quenchers*

*Coat of Arms: Stylized bronze mountain with streaks of red and gold on a blue field*

Stretching across the bulk of the Crown of Burquebain, The Thanes' Republic of Burquebain is the only known dwarven land. Although a precise founding date is unknown to non-dwarves,

most scholars believe that Burquebain (as the Republic is often referred to by dwarves) was founded as a unified nation in 40 of the Age of Humen. Legends, bard's tales, and even a few Burquebainian reports indicate that the roots of Burquebain are tied directly to the great Empire of Satrimmoth. According to legends, this great Empire, the first of the Six Empires, was destroyed in a terrible calamity in the Age of Mist, resulting in the creation of the Desolate South; the survivors would be the forebears of Burquebain. Currently, Burquebain is the longest-lived nation, one of the most powerful, and certainly the most technologically and, according to the dwarves, most culturally advanced in Drm.

Burquebain is a homogenous society composed entirely of dwarves. Although there are different clans or subspecies of dwarves (including at least two exiled/purged clans), all dwarves are Burquebainian and all Burquebainians are dwarves. Burquebain exists under an elaborate governmental structure in which every voice is heard within Drm's original democratic society. Ruled from the capital called the Burning Crown (which lies within the crater of an extinct volcano) by the Enclave of Thaness, virtually every aspect of life in Burquebain is monitored, organized, and structured in such a way as to ensure productivity and order. Everyone has his or her place and every person is encouraged to improve personally while looking after those with fewer skills and intellect. Although financial wealth is not the single factor by which success is measured, Burquebainians believe that those who earned their wealth through honest, hard work are entitled to it; however, the wealthy must share with others who have worked hard and may not have been as skillful, thus ensuring that all of Burquebainian society prospers. Every person is encouraged to use the blessings given to him or her by Masters of the Mountain, the pantheon of gods worshipped by dwarves.

Burquebainians are religious people, often calling on the aid of the head of the Masters of the Mountains, Barthramus. Still, Burquebainians believe that people must be able to better themselves and their surroundings. As such, Burquebainians have created all manner of technology to a degree unsurpassed elsewhere in Drm. Burquebain trades heavily in metal ores, minerals, rocks and stones, and ideas. The piano, printing press, cement, steam engines, and the like were all created in Burquebain. Although there is a degree of divine magic in Burquebain, there is little in the way of The Word.

Burquebainians believe that dwarves are the preeminent race in Drm. Historically standoffish, Burquebainians have only recently gotten involved with most of Drm, offering their wares, ideals, and technology for trade. As a whole, Burquebainians are precise to a fault, do not mince words, despise laziness and injustice, and hate thieves. Among the people in the Crown of Burquebain, Burquebain counts only the Kingdoms of K'Rystas as allies, viewing the other people as either evil (Cholis, Ugran), too arrogant and dangerous (Xyl), or filled with sentient vermin (Irprethe, Shry, Ugthara). Beyond the Crown, Burquebain counts Ashtur, Mandl, and far-off Valdeze as allies.

#### **Ugthara (fire giants)**

*Capital: N/A*

*Key Locations: The Deepest Furnace, Castle Incandescence, Simmering Sea*

*Coat of Arms: A flaming mountain*

Lying within the northern most reaches of the Crown of Burquebain before the Simmering Sea is the huge city-state of Ugthara. Dominated entirely by fire giants, Ugthara is one of the least known places Under the Crown due to its remoteness and the fear most humen have to approach the land of giants. Ugthara's past is a mystery, although most Sages believe that the first and longest-lived city-state of fire giants has its roots with the *War of Anvil and Hammer* between 51 AH and 122 AH. Rumors persist that Ugthara is a sprawling, burning militaristic place where the Ugtharans practice and prepare for a great war that will usher in the *Great Reckoning*.

Ugthara is the only known city of fire giants although there are said to be numerous settlements for the relatively small fire giant populations. The heart of Ugthara is Castle Incandescence, a tremendous military fortress that burns with the hottest flame against the frigid air of the Crown of Burquebain. Ruled by the Imferium, six immensely powerful warrior-priests, Ugtharans believe that they are the future of Drm and that they are destined to survive the *Great Reckoning* to come. They trade only in weapons of war, and life revolves around eternal preparation for the expected great wars. The weak serve the strong, but the strong must defend the weak if only to ensure the continuation of the fire giant race. Fire giants worship a god named Surtur, although there are persistent rumors that Dauth Alman, Malvolans, Apollyon, Eblis, and the Lords of Nine Hells of Perdition find plenty of worshippers.

Hateful, spiteful people, the fire giants of Ugthara (and arguably all fire giants) detest dwarves for some undisclosed reason and do not trade or otherwise interact peaceably with Burquebain. Ugthara does trade with the various sapien tribes of Froden Norv, with many near-by chirpto polises (during times of peace), and there are frequent interactions with the Duchies of Ugran. Beyond business interaction, Ugthara has only been stirred into *The Darkhold*, although Burquebain insists that they are ever contesting the evil of Ugthara.

#### **Shry (chirpto)**

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Locations: The Hanging Gardens*

*Coat of Arms: N/A*

Shry is the most recent attempt by the chirpto to create a second, permanent chirpto polis. Two factors set this attempt apart from previous ones. First, Shry maintains an official line of rulers and nobles, and second, Shry is designed to easily incorporate the life-styles of the other humen races. Located in the rocky Mathbor Hills, the Shry has been somewhat successful.

The Shry was founded by those chirpto who stood opposed to the Forbidden Order controlled Irprethe and nearby Chirpto polises following *The Darkhold* in 88 AE. Led by a charismatic chirpto named Shry, these chirpto elected to put their liberty in the hands of those who fought against the tyranny imposed by the Forbidden Orders. With the aid of Ugran hobgoblins and sapiens from sundered Xyl, Shry was founded with Shry as its king, and the other various heroes as nobles.

Although there is a clear hierarchy of power in Shry, the chirpto of Shry still value their liberty. The laws and powers of the king of Shry are few compared to places like Ashtur or Asnan, but are plenty for chirpto. This power is shared by the four Vynds, the nobles of Shry who control the majority of Shry's land and trade. Interestingly, religion holds little strength in Shry due to what the forebears of Shry learned under the Forbidden Orders and the demons once worshipped by their Irprethan cousins. Theatre remains a dominant form of entertainment, although gladiatorial combat – as a vehicle for entertainment and punishment – has become very popular in Shry.

Shrians are largely composed of chirpto, although there are large numbers of hobgoblins and

sapiens in the population. As a whole, Shrians are difficult to categorize, although there is a tendency towards haughtiness in the face of outsiders and a disdain for clerics and religious individuals and groups. They tend to view other chirpto polises, including Irprethe, as primitive and short-sighted. Shry is on excellent terms with the Duchies of Ugran and has no animosity towards the Kingdoms of K'Rystas; they detest the Thanes' Republic of Burquebain and Xyl while they regard Cholis and Froden Norv neutrally.

***Irprethe (chirpto)***

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Locations: Chreekin*

*Coat of Arms: N/A*

The oldest of the various chirpto polises, Irprethe is also the largest and the only one that boasts any semblance of law and an organized military. Located on the far east of southern portions of the Crown of Burquebain in the caverns of Mount Irpreth, Irprethe is what most people familiar with chirpto think when chirpto civilization comes to mind.

No one knows when Irprethe was founded. Some reports indicate that it was forged during the *War of Iron Wings*, while others insist it was forged during the *War of the Unified Crown*. Whatever the case, all chirpto plays agree that Irprethe was created as a meeting place for the most prominent chirpto warriors and singers to offer defense against Burquebainian and sapien aggression and as an outlet for creativity and art. The first recorded mention of Irprethe was in Burquebainian documents in 1875 AG. Irprethe was a bastion of darkness for the Forbidden Orders during *The Darkhold*.

Irprethe is ruled by what most dwarves and sapiens would call a mob; Irprethans say the city is ruled by a Dictator. Aside from enforcing the few laws surrounding taxes, property, theft, and acts of violence, the Dictator does not interfere in the lives of the population. The Dictator and his entourage are routinely challenged by various factions referred to as Parties. These Parties vie to overthrow the existing Dictator in a bid to offer greater freedom to the people of Irprethe. Although the majority of conflict is verbal or conducted through satirical plays, violent civil unrest does happen every few decades during which one Dictatorship is overthrown and replaced by a new Dictator and Party. For the most part, Irprethans

go about their lives with little interference from the Dictator or the various Parties; indeed most Irprethans know nothing about the conflicts until civil war breaks. There are two establishments that bind Irprethans together, however, religion and theatre.

Although there are literally scores of divine and not-so-divine beings worshipped in Irprethe, two are dominant. Churarbus and Marlon are both members of the Aldra pantheon and receive the greatest amount of veneration. The various churches associated with these goddesses compete with each other in determining what is orthodox; they also compete to achieve Dictatorship over Irprethe.

Irprethe is known to the rest of Drm for its plays. Irprethe actors and minstrels regularly travel throughout the Crown of Burquebain and beyond; they have performed as far west as Ash-tur and as far south as Mandl to perform their plays. Irprethe is also known for its stoneware, particularly its hanging vases and wall decorations.

Irprethans view themselves as truly free. The only laws in place are those that allow their polis to exist and prosper. As a whole, Irprethans view other chirpto settlements as backwaters, knowing that most will implode or explode within twenty years from civil war or abandonment. Irprethans are on terrible terms with the chirpto of Shry, viewing them as usurpers to the Irprethe tradition. Irprethans generally get along well with all other races and nations, although there are times during which a powerful Party may sway the minds of the people into hating another race or nation. All Irprethans hate Burquebain and dwarves.

***Xyl (sapiens)***

*Capital: N/A*

*Important locations: Glowing Caverns of Xyl, Great Fortress of Gys, the Heartless Port, Magistrate Hall, Tomb of Gys, Xylite Ruins*

*Coat of Arms: Stylized groups of symbols similar to the name of the city-state*

Crouched within a perpetually thick fog on the northwestern banks of the Heartless Sea, Xyl is a city-state with an ancient past. Once the center, capital, and namesake of a large magocracy that spread across the Heartless Sea, Xyl was sundered during *The Darkhold* over 750 years ago. Despite its fall from the pinnacle of arcane power

in Drm, present day Xyl and its people exist as reminders of a time long since departed from the continent-realm.

Originally a series of towns and hamlets created by sapien survivors of the *Demon Wars* during the *Battles of the Earth and Sky* with the aid of Burquebain, this namless confederacy was a place known for its darkling metal deposits and the magical properties of what was originally referred to as the Blass Glass Sea. This drew the attention of wizards from across Drm, particularly the Ash of Ashtur. This created conflict with the established arcane schools in the area, particularly the largest run by a man called Xyl the Heartless. In order to defeat his proclaimed enemies among the Ash, Xyl researched the means to strip other arcanists of their power. He forged the Magistrates, drove the Ash from Xyl, and quickly took control of the towns. In 950 ADR, he named his territory Xyl and the Black Glass Sea became known as the Heartless Sea. The Magistrates ruled for centuries, denouncing not only other arcanists as mewling children, but developed a fierce hatred for the divine. The Magistrates would eagerly take part in the Forbidden Orders during Age of Glory, a decision that would lead to their downfall by the end of *The Darkhold*.

Although the power of the Magistrates, Xyl's former rulers, was crushed during *The Darkhold*, Xyl continues to be ruled by a powerful cabal of arcane spellcasters, the Savants of the Mist (or Savants for short) from the Great Fortress of Gys. The Savants are very involved in the day-to-day activities of Xyl's people, dictating a person's profession, where an individual may live, who a person may marry, and whether a person may have or bear children. Xyl's population, however, seems largely accepting of their strict life, and there seems to be no poverty or inequality among the population save the distinction between the Savants and the mundane folk. Xylites believe that their lives are better off predetermined and based upon the unknown, but clearly accurate, "science" used by the Savants. Xyl is defended by the Heartless Army, the only remnant of the Xyl Kingdom from the years before *The Darkhold*. Totally devoid of any sense of self, the warriors of the Heartless Army are completely dedicated to the Savants and the continued existence of Xyl. Xyl is a rich place that rivals Ashtur in the production of darkling metal and is one of the few places Under the Crown that actively manufactures and sells magical devices abroad. While The Word is strong, religion is almost non-existent in Xyl. There are a few isolated sects associated with

gods like Lanira, Lestonises, Mastrum, and Thore Mire (in her "judge" aspect).

Xylites are often perceived as arrogant, cold, and secretive. Although it's been over 700 years since *The Darkhold*, Xylites bear a deep sense of shame and anger with how their country and forefathers fared in the war's aftermath. Xylites scorn the powers of Burquebain and Ashtur, and regularly engage in acts of aggression against their hated sister-state, Cholis. Xyl regularly staves off attacks from the Froden Norv. Xyl is dominated by sapiens who are relatively tall and slender with pale skin, light hair, clear blue eyes, and fine, precise features. They tend to dress in heavy garments, and capes are popular. Although they have no love for chirpto or hobgoblins, Xyl counts Irprethe and Shry, and the Duchies of Ugran as fair-weather allies; a fair number of both races live in Xyl.

#### ***Cholis (sapiens)***

*Capital:* N/A

*Important Locations:* the Frozen Globe, Torminus's Lair, the Frozen Hearth of Lestonises

*Coat of Arms:* The Frozen Globe

Once part of the nation of Xyl, Cholis now stands as one of the largest bastions of demon-worship in Drm. Cholis lies on the southeastern bank of the Heartless Sea where it was founded during the years immediately following the *Demon Wars*. Since its inception, Cholis has remained a powerful and evil force in the far north.

Like Xyl, Cholis is dominated by sapiens, although there are many chirpto and hobgoblins. It is not unusual to encounter frost giants and "tame" ice trolls on occasion. The people of Cholis favor their Xylite cousins, tending to be tall and slender with saturnine features. However, due to the growing interaction with the people of the Norvern nations, there are quite a few burly, long-haired Cholites. Virtually everyone carries a weapon as the people of Cholis are as likely to fight among themselves as they are against perceived enemies.

The Frozen Globe of Cholis lies within the Heartless Sea in the far north of the city-state. From the Globe rule the terrible S'Thith, a family of demon worshippers. Through incessant inbreeding as well as the "gifts" of their Abyssal patrons, the S'Thith are as physically warped as they are powerful. It is rumored that the S'Thith worship



the Demon Prince of the Undead, Orcus. The rule of the S'Thith is almost non-existent as they simply demand that taxes are paid and that Cholites do their bidding; the S'Thith maintain their power through their control of the Named One, Torminus Icenhearth. Beneath the S'Thith are different Enclaves dedicated to other Demon Princes, Dukes of Hell, and a few Aldra who in turn control those within their reach. The city is a cesspool of misery where bloody sacrifices are a part of daily life.

Cholites are uniformly decadent and debased. Their city survives due to the heavy amount of slave-trade, its accepting attitude regarding contraband from various organizations, and its serving as a safe haven for all kinds of cruel and sinister people. Cholis has no true allies as a unified city-state; some of the Enclaves are allied to the Norvern nations, while others are allied with the Duchies of Ugran, and still others are allied with Irprethe and other Chirpto polises. As a whole, Cholites hate Xyl, Burquebain, and K'Rystas.

#### ***The Duchies of Ugran (hobgoblins)***

*Capital: Borthor'Hax*

*Important Locations: The Eight Spires of Arunix, Gladiatorial, Mathborin's Curse, Shrine of Carnabasc*

*Coat of Arms: Eight silver (or white) broad swords in a circle, their points touching in the center of a black field superimposed on red slash.*

The eight Duchies of Ugran stands as one of the oldest predominately hobgoblin nations in Drm. Stretching from eastern most reaches of the Barren Peaks into the southern portions of Froden Norv and south of the Heartless Sea, the Duchies of Ugran constitute a powerful and growing force Under the Crown.

The Duchies of Ugran as they exist today has its roots in the *War of the Blue Mountain* of 101 AD that united the various kings of the hobgoblins in the Ugran Plains under the might of the Named One, Euroclydon Stormchurner. Although the greatest of these kings, Mathborin II, would perish during the *War of the Blue Mountain*, his son Ugran, taking advantage of the notoriety his mighty father attained, used this clout, well-timed assassinations, and intimidation to consolidate the remaining kings under his banner. The Duchies were united under Ugran in 110 AD. The Duchies soon created a powerful military dukedom ruled by the Archduke of Ugran in a totalitarian, militaristic, hereditary regime that has rarely

been threatened by internal conflicts.

Although almost entirely populated by hobgoblins, the Duchies also have a fair number of ogres, ogre-magi, and trolls scattered across the vast territory. The hobgoblins of Ugran tend to be hulking even by hobgoblin standards, sporting deep orange-furred skin, prominent ears, and muzzle-like noses and mouths; they rarely have protruding tusks or fangs. Even the basest commoner tends towards a militaristic appearance, often wearing armor and always carrying a weapon; only the nobility may use edged weapons and only the Royal Line of Ugran may use swords.

Ugran is a military-state. Although the Ugran hobgoblins trade frequently and interact with the various people and races Under the Crown, every aspect of life within Ugran is based upon a family's military background and the individual's military experience. This allows an impressive degree of mobility for individuals, but aside from the Ducal Clans, familial/class station is virtually impossible to shed. This complex and convoluted system of clan versus individual "honor" is known as *pertaxts* and it permeates every aspect of life in Ugran. Males and females are completely equal, although there are more males with greater *pertaxts* because they tend to be stronger than females. Daily life revolves around physical training, trade, and improving the station of the individual, the clan, and the Duchy. The Dukes of Ugran rule utterly, but there is a striving bureaucracy that deals with the day-to-day concerns. There are dozens of gladiatorial domes scattered across Ugran; combats of all kinds take place in the domes. Fighting in a gladiatorial is a code of honor for those with the greatest *pertaxts*. The Gladiatorial in Borthor'Hax is the largest such arena in Drm.

The war-like fervor of Ugran is steeped in religion. The hobgoblins of Ugran worship a pantheon known as the Watchers from Deep Flames; the chief of this small and very precise pantheon (dominated by war-like deities) is Arunix, a hated enemy of the Aldra pantheon. Although accorded significant respect, the clergy of the Watchers still function within the concept of *pertaxts*.

Ugran hobgoblins are haughty and sinister. They believe that they are preparing to rule all of Drm and that all other beings will either serve them or be eradicated. Until that time comes, though, Ugranans are willing and eager to treat with other races, particularly in mercantile pursuits. Despite past aggressions against their cur-

rent allies during events like *The Darkhold*, Ugran is known for the production of superior weapons, superb iron, and fine minds with regards to combat and military training. Ugran deals well with the various chirpto polises, the more honorable Enclaves of Cholis, Xyl, the various Goblin Tribes of the Lands of the Pact, Asnan, Ashtur, Tysunis, and Mandl.

## **The Deep Sea**

### **Ashtur (sapien)**

*"The Gilded City"*

*Capital: Vashtar*

*Important Locations: Black Hall Library, Branedeth Horde, Dark Flow, Gilded Path, Hall Mansion, The Secluded Mountain, Weeping Burashcar, Well of Gold*

*Coat of Arms: A stylized bluish-white star with five golden stripes extending from the left sides in a 45 degree angle spread, all on a deep blue field. The star always lies in the lower right hand corner of the field.*

Arguably the richest sapien land Under the Crown, Ashtur is also one of the most vital locations for intercontinental trade in Drm, providing the most accessible bridge between the Lands Under the Crown and the Great Kharsis Desert. The title "Gilded City" is something of a misnomer as Ashtur is composed of four distinct cities, although two are the most important: Parshton, being the largest and best known, and Vashtar, serving as the capital and the demesne of Ashtur's powerful rulers.

It is difficult to assign a specific date for Ashtur's founding. Both Parshton and Vashtar have existed for thousands of years, probably since the Age of Humen. The initial population of these pre-Ashturians was composed of sapiens from the Great Kharsis Desert who entered the Lands Under the Crown through the Gilded Pass. Although these different groups that settled the area just beyond the Gilded Path warred and challenged each other, by the Age of Greatness they all recognized themselves as kin. Ashtur appears to be a land of extreme balance. On the one hand, Ashtur is willing to engage in and become committed to actions with little to no contemplation; on the other hand, Ashtur is considered one of the intellectual hubs of Drm, and force of stability in the Deep Sea and Crown of Burquebain.

Money, intellect, and the drive to perfection are the three components that define Ashtur and

dictate the nature of Ashturian society and politics. All are inextricably linked, although intellectual superiority seems to be the most important asset in Ashtur if one looks to the rulers of the Gilded City. The enigmatic and secretive Ash, a cabal of wizards of unknown number, rules Ashtur, their knowledge of The Word rivaled only by the Magistrates and Savants of the Mists of Xyl, and the ancient Imperial Sentinels of extinct Vhendimmoth. However, most of the direct rulership of Ashtur is conducted by the High Halls, a group composed of the representatives of noble families, the most powerful trade Guilds, and the enforcers of peace and order, the Darkling Warriors. Still, most Ashturians only deal with the Guilds, the groups that control all manner of trade, skill, and artistry in Ashtur. Most people are either employed by the Guild or find the means to make a living without attracting Guild attention. Religious orders also carry great authority.

There are literally dozens of different religious organizations in Ashtur. This cosmopolitan attitude is only rivaled in Mandl, and this makes Ashtur an inviting place to those interested in learning about the different gods and beings of power worshipped across the continent-realm. No one god dominates Ashturian culture, although greater gods of all types tend to receive the greatest amount of veneration.

Aside from Ashturian sapiens, all manner of humen live in Ashtur with no restriction so long as they obey the laws of the land. There are even beings from far off Realities, like genies or nature spirits from the Great Kharsis Desert. Faeries are often seen flying throughout the city on some manner of errand for the Ash, while a quasit may be spotted carrying out the orders of a demon-worshipper. All kinds are welcome to Ashtur so long as they are peaceful and laden with coin. Trade and the desire for more trade is what drives this openness. Through Ashtur, the bulk of trade between the Great Kharsis Desert and the Lands Under the Crown is conducted. Ashtur also boasts its own wealth of gold, diamonds, and the unique metal known as darkling. There are more money-lenders in Ashtur than anywhere else save Mandl.

Ashturians are very distinct in appearance to the other sapiens of the Deep Sea and Crown areas. They tend to be shorter, have mahogany skin, dark hair, and bright eyes. They also tend to dress in earth tones unlike their neighbors, and prefer loose-fitting garments, although hats have never been considered fashionable. Only high ranking or wealthy persons wear any kind of head

garment or jewelry. Despite Guild domination in Ashturian economy, most of Ashtur's population is significantly better off, well read, and better fed than virtually any other population in Drm. The appellation "Gilded City" is well earned.

***Pyrama (dwarves, sapien)***

*"City of the Rock Gates"*

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Sites: Empty Bowl, Portal of Knowledge, The Rock Gates, Sage Tower, The Salt Mines, Sea of Tentacles, Sirines' Flats*

*Coat of Arms: The Rock Gates*

Once part of the ancient empire of Golhav, Pyrama stood as a powerful keep to defend against the aggression of Ashtur and chirpto threats. Empowered by mighty sorcerers and priests of Mastrum, Pyrama was nevertheless unable to defend the rest of Golhav from the threats of *The Darkhold* that resulted in the end of Golhavan dominance in northern Drm. Now, Pyrama serves as an outlet for Burquebainian studies, making it a place of intellectuals and sages that rivals the Guild of Knowledge in nearby Ashtur.

Prior to *The Darkhold*, Pyrama was a huge Golhavan military outpost heavily supported by The Word, both arcane and divine. Pyrama was the only place in Golhav known for its magic and knowledge; however, unlike Ashtur and later Xyl, Pyrama did not support magical innovation or experimentation. Shortly after Hrugtha, Golhav's capital, was destroyed by the death knight known as The Blackiron in 1966 AoG during the *Battle of Bloodied Iron*, Pyrama was also overrun, spelling the end of Golhav when its cities were taken over by the Forbidden Orders. During *The Darkhold*, Pyrama became a place of significance due when the dwarves sought to smuggle weapons and information out of their besieged mountain stronghold to Ashtur in the battles against the Forbidden Orders. Since *The Darkhold*, Pyrama has been a place of study and knowledge more than a place of mercantilism.

Pyrama is ruled by the High Sage, a man or woman elected by the College of Sages, a council of well-known scholars. While many are practiced in The Word, this is not a requirement to join the College. The College serves as the most direct intermediary not just with the dwarves of Burquebain (often serving as the first non-dwarves to test Burquebainian technology), but as objective commentators of the works other scholars produce

through out the Lands Under the Crown. The College of Sages rulership is very spartan, interfering in the common life of the citizens only as necessary. Day-to-day affairs are managed by the various Sage estates. There is not a standing army or even an organized guard as Pyrama is heavily defended by dwarven volunteers, dwarven battlements, and clerics of Mastrum. Some say that the Thanes' Republic of Burquebain is the true power in Pyrama, although the College of Sages and Burquebain would disagree. The dwarves' interests seem limited to getting their wares out of their mountain halls and otherwise allow Pyrama to function without their interference. All life in Pyrama revolves around the Sages, although in recent years there has been a growing degree of independent mercantilism, including sales to treasure hunters due to the proximity of the Portal of Knowledge, a maze that supposedly leads to the mysterious Isle of Knowledge and possibly the Endless Chasm.

Mastrum continues to hold significant authority despite his seemingly contradictory nature relative to the College of Sages. The worshippers of Mastrum view much of Pyrama, especially The Rock Gates, as sacred to their god and actively defend such locations against outsiders. It is believed that Mastrumites have an unsaid agreement with the College of Sages that allows the clerics to serve as *de facto* guards and defenders while the Sages respect the religious convictions and limitations of the clerics' beliefs. Recently, the church of Edian has taken hold in Pyrama, bolstered in part with the presence of the Merchants of Kharsis. Edites have swiftly run afoul of the College of Sages and the Mastrumites. Other religions in Pyrama include Celzar, Nemaria, Brumbd, Minarthris, Dauth Alman, Malvolans, and Bythal Dalax.

Much of Pyrama's economy is dependant upon those that travel to the city in search of knowledge, access to Burquebain, or adventure. As a result, Pyraman wares tend to be more expensive than elsewhere in throughout the Deep Sea. There are many independent prospectors and merchants in Pyrama, although recent Burquebainian sales have drawn the attention of the Merchants of Kharsis who may well threaten the relative internal peace and structure of Pyrama. Dwarven presence is the only thing that keeps the predations of Tysunis at bay, although the recent arrival of the Merchants of Kharsis may change this.

Pyramans are somewhat shorter and heavier

than most other people in the Deep Sea. They also tend to be very well read, but without the cosmopolitan attitude exhibited by their Ashturian neighbors. Robes, tunics, and leggings are typical attire for most people in Pyrama.

### ***Tysunis (sapiens)***

*"City of a Thousand Ships" "City of a Thousand Sins"*

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Sites: The Blackiron's March, Halls of Gnashing Teeth, The Living Graveyard, Hall of the Venom Fount, Pitted Bay, The Port of Sharks, Ruins of Hrugtha, The Scorched Sea, Typhoon Tower, The Weeping Sea, Well of the Maw*

*Coat of Arms: Typhoon Tower on a dark green field*

Unlike beautiful Asnan, Tysunis does nothing to hide its villainy and evil. The City of a Thousand Sins is second only to Asnan in the Deep Sea for its violence and depravity. Some say this is a legacy of its Golhavan origins as the former capital of the ancient "Barbarian Empire," Hrugtha, once clutched the area north of Tysunis. Others believe that the historic worship of violent and foul gods and worse soiled and cursed the land. Whatever the case, Tysunis is a powerful threat to all the cities and nations in the Deep Sea, held in check only by the Savants of the Mist in Xyl, the Ash of Ashtur, and their frightful cousins in Asnan, although some believe that the citizens of Tysunis alone limit their city-state's power.

Golhav rivaled Ashtur for dominance in the Deep Sea region from the Age of Greatness until the Age of Glory. The center of Golhav was its capital, Hrugtha, and it was here that all of the greatest achievements for Golhav could be traced. Golhav's end was sealed when it refused to join the Forbidden Order in the Age of Glory. Like a burning scythe the death knight known as the Blackiron swept across Golhav, laying waste to all in his path. In the summer of 1966 AoG, The Blackiron burned Hrugtha to the ground and then sowed the land with the blood of the city's rulers. The Ruins of Hrugtha became a major site for the demon summoning and undead creation practiced by the servants of the Forbidden Orders. In 1999 AoG, Forbidden Order loyalists that escaped justice from the fractioned Forces of Noon began to gather in the parts south of the Ruins of Hrugtha. One of the greatest, a sorcerer known only as

the Storm King, built a great tower he dubbed Typhoon Tower. Within a few decades, this area became known as Tysunis; to date, the origin of the name is unclear, although some posit that it is the Storm King's true name. Tysunis has become a haven for pirates, slavers, demonologists, and other vile and unrepentant people that do not even wish to operate under a façade of civility but want easy access to trade (piracy).

Tysunis continues to be ruled by the Storm King, or at least men claiming to be the Storm King. Rarely seen outside Typhoon Tower, the Storm King appears not to have aged at all. Most of his dictates, which tend to be limited to changes in taxation or putting down excessive unrest or riots, are carried out by the Gale, a motley crew trained in a variety of techniques. The Gale is commanded by the Gale Master who usually issues most of the Storm King's decrees. When not enforcing the Storm King's will in Tysunis, the Gale guards lands under their lord's control, collects taxes from merchants and citizens, or travels the Deep Sea enacting his will. Aside from the Storm King and the Gale, the city is controlled by the wealthiest and most powerful individuals and whatever cult follows them. Unsurprisingly, wizards and priests wield the greatest influence in Tysunis, although highly experienced warriors often dominate great swaths of land. The greatest of these groups are the Marauders, a group of very organized, very dangerous pirates that threaten all shipping in the Deep Sea. Not even the Pirate Lords of Asnan are as cruel as this group, who claim support from evil monsters of the deep. The Merchants of Kharsis have recently found Tysunis to their liking, although they have swiftly developed an enmity with the Marauders. Tysunis continues to exist because the various factions value their relative freedom too much to risk losing it and so rarely allow their rivalries to get the better of them unless they can destroy their foes in a swift stroke.

If there are goodly churches in Tysunis they are in hiding. Virtually every evil Aldra is worshipped here. Among the most prominent is Malvolans, the goddess of war and fire. The church of Malvolans is divided into a number of warring factions. Still, their influence in the city is significant. Aside from Aldra like Ostensis, Cabernasus, and Nethmar, demonic beings have many cults in Tysunis. Demogorgon, the Prince of Demons, has a large cult that threatens to surpass that of Malvolans in size. As of late, conflicts between the various religions and cults has grown and spread to engulf Asnan, even beginning to threaten Pyrama and

Karnasis.

There are no particular trade items in Tysunis. In many ways, Tysunis is a sprawling, obvious “hide-out” for those fleeing the laws of other nearby lands. Few governments would dare send their agents into Tysunis in pursuit of a criminal without extremely good reason as such agents tend to be targeted by both the inhabitants and rulers of Tysunis as malcontents. Of course, those fleeing to Tysunis to hide must be careful as there are those who would not think twice about returning them from whence they came for the right price. Tysunites have no special hatred for any particular race, although dwarves, elves, and kin are very rarely seen in the city. Chirpto and hobgoblin are fairly common as are degenerate races like goblins, kobolds, ogres, and trolls; giants are not an uncommon sight.

Tysunites are generally vindictive, cold-hearted people who care for little else but themselves. Tysunites tend to be much taller than most sapiens, with broad shoulders, dark hair and eyes, and pale skin. Of course, the influx of criminals from across the Deep Sea will broadened the appearance of natives over time.

***Karnasis (sapien)***

*“The Sea’s Jewel” “The Sea’s Fools”*

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Sites: Bloody Bay, The Bloody Port, Dens of the Kraken, Fort Passmenot, Golden Cove, Towers of Jaws, Serene City, Singing Cove, White Isle*

*Coat of Arms: A shark rising from sea beneath three stars. The shark is surrounded by seven tentacles.*

A relatively new rising power in the Deep Sea area, Karnasis has an old legacy of war, adventure, and intrigue. Dominated by the descendants of the infamous Brine of Hevillet, Karnasis remains a place of high dreams and great expectations. The reality of the place is that of lost, but hardly forgotten, hope. Composed of old buildings and older secrets, Karnasis remains one of the most treasure-filled locations not just in the Deep Sea, but throughout Drm.

Karnasis was established in 188 Age of Enlightenment by merchants and ship captains weary of the threat pirate threats and the tolls charged by the Pirate Lords of Asnan and the various sea-raiders of Tysunis. One of the few safe

harbors for the more honest (some would say, weaker) maritime traders was near the towns of those that claimed descent from ancient Hevillet. The wealthiest of these men and women, Karnasis Longstride, had become renowned for his exploration in the waters near the Bloody Port. In 187, he claimed to have found the means to raise the land on which the mythical Towers of Jaws once stood on submerged White Isle, with the artifact known as the Deep Rod. If the various merchants and captains concerned for their wealth and safety agreed to follow where he led, Karnasis would raise the Tower and establish a new, safe harbor for those traveling the northern Deep Sea. The others agreed and, with the Deep Rod, Karnasis accomplished his end of the bargain and the town that immediately took his name was formed. Karnasis swiftly became the safest harbor in the Deep Sea aside from Ashtur’s. However, what the various founders of Karnasis did not expect was that with raising White Isle and the stronghold of the Brine, they would also draw the attention of creatures not seen since *The Darkhold*. Although Karnasis has managed to flourish, many believe that it is not as prosperous as it could be due to threats by the creatures that populate much of the water around the White Isle, not to mention the predations of Tysunis.

The ruler of Karnasis is elected by the population and is dubbed the Briny One, in honor of the Brine. The Briny One is typically the wealthiest merchant or an accomplished naval commander. The Briny One’s rulership is supported by the various merchants that regulate trade. Commonly referred to as the Seafarers, these merchants have historically resisted attempts to allow the Briny One significant power while they often fight among themselves. As a result, there is not a unified guard or navy in Karnasis; rather, each Seafarer and the Briny One have their own small armies. Laws in Karnasis are fluid and subject to the need for an immediate decision or the presence of immediate threat. The only established laws are those that ensure a safe port and open trade. Stifling trade or cheating a customer may well result in a dunk in the Bloody Bay. Aside from the Briny One and the Seafarers, the only other important groups are those of a religious bend, particularly the churches of lycathis, Mastrum, and Minarthris.

Religious life in Karnasis limited to sacrifices. The people of Karnasis believe that the gods should be propitiated, but that decent payment for services rendered is more than enough. To date, the only religion that has maintained significant

authority in Karnasis is that of Minarthris. The priests of Minarthris hold the greatest power on White Isle, although they have never set foot in the Tower of Jaws. They actively encourage sacrifices of bounty and provide clerics to ships sailing the more dangerous reaches of the Deep Sea. lycarthis is also very popular, although he is better known to the more land-based Karnasins. There are unsubstantiated rumors that a cult of Demogorgon has established a footing in the Dens of the Kraken. Arcane magic is highly regarded, however, and there have always been a few well known arcanists in Karnasis since its founding.

Karnasins are not particularly fatalistic, although most believe that they are destined for great wealth and are deserving of safety. While not dishonest, Karnasins are wily barterers and very competent in getting the best deal. Although they offer excellent hospitality to those that anchor in their harbors, they expect to be well paid. They are often perceived as pushy by outsiders. Karnasis exports few tangible wares, mostly pearls, kelp, and crafts. Although they have no love for elves, Karnasins will never turn away one that pays well. Likewise, they do not particularly care for hobgoblins or chirpto. Dwarves are highly regarded since they are known to pay well for excellent service. Karnasins resent the people of Ashtur, perceiving them as patronizing; they loathe Asnians, Tysunites, and Pyramans, and they fear the people of Xyl.

Karnasins strongly resemble Asnians, although they have a more rustic, weathered look. Contrastingly, they often wear bright, almost garish attire.

**Asnan (sapien)**

*"The Coral City," "The City of Eels"*

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Locations: Barren Peaks, The Coral Palace, Debna's Shrine, Eternal Burning Pyre, Glistening Inlet, Mount Coral, Mount Oblivon, Shark's City, Springs of Blood, Temple of Holy Retribution*

*Coat of Arms: Two red eels or serpents rising between four large blue-green waves on a purple field.*

There are few places in Drm more beautiful than Asnan. Coiled like a seacutter eel at rest on the eastern banks of the Deep Sea under the shade of the Barren Peaks, half of Asnan extends across scores of small islands in the Deep, each

connected by arched bridges and tunnels. The water is a rich, deep blue, hiding the legions of blood-thirsty chisel fish and seacutter eels lurking just under the surface. The beauty of the water that hides these deadly fish reflects the beauty of the city that hides the decrepitude of its people. There are few places in Drm as cut-throat and as deadly as Asnan, the City of Eels.

Asnan was founded in 126 GA by the infamous Debna Sect of Ashtur. Named after Debna's eldest son, Asnan was created by the elves and sapiens Debna indentured into servitude after his successes in the *Second Deep Sea War*. Intended as a secondary capital for Debna's empire, Asnan was designed to be a utopia on Drm. The buildings are built from marble mined from the Barren Peaks, and the numerous bridges are reinforced with magical enchantments to maintain a crisp appearance. Asnan's prosperity lasted for centuries, but would be undone during the *Demon Wars* when the city was overrun by a terrible being known as The Blackiron. Although the infrastructure remained intact, most of Asnan's people were killed or fled. The abandoned city soon became a haven for pirates, religious fanatics, and thieves. These three apparently disparate groups became the foundation upon which modern Asnan is built.

Asnan is ruled by a Grand Marshal. Although most Grand Marshals are descendants of one of the various noble-lines of Debna Sect, anyone with the strength of arms and power to overthrow an existing Grand Marshal may claim the coronal. The Grand Marshall is a king in every way save name and he or she rules with absolute authority so long as he or she has the means to enforce his or her edicts. The power of the Grand Marshal is contested by the so-called Pirate Lords and the various religious orders, particularly the Church of Bythal Dalax and the vying factions of Malvolans. The Pirate Lords are nothing more than maritime bandits who function in Asnan so long as they pay their tithe to the Grand Marshal. The Church of Bythal Dalax has tremendous influence on the lives of Asnians, so much so that most Grand Marshals have taken and lost their claim to the coronal through the Church of Bythal Dalax.

The Church of Bythal Dalax claims Asnan as its center of power in Drm. The hegemony of the Church of Bythal Dalax is challenged by those that worship Malvolans. The people of Asnan fear to worship any one god, knowing that to do so will invite the wrath of other gods and their worshippers. As a result, there is no central religion in Asnan.

The people of Asnan do what they can to get by. The Pirate Lords control the majority of "trade" with the rest of the Deep Sea. It is the contests between the Pirate Lords, the churches, and the Grand Marshal and his sycophants that maintain the flow of currency in Asnan. Pearls, rubies, sapphire, seafood, coral decorations, marble, and slaves (shipped to Tysunis, the Great Kharsis Desert, or Froden Norv) are the dominant trade items. Asnians are universally unkept and miserable, doing what they must to make ends meet. Sapiens dominate Asnan; dwarves and elves are hated. It is not unusual to encounter hobgoblins or chirpto.

Asnians tend towards being of slightly taller than average height with broad, square shoulders, pale hair, paler eyes, and almost white skin. Attire tends to be conservative and dark, and cloaks are common.

### ***Hoardens ( sapien)***

*Capital: Fort Spite*

*Important Sites: The Barren Shadows, Burning Fort, The Glorious Cape, Kraken Fort, Footprints of the Gods, Fort Tusked, Frozen Marsh, Sulking Hallows*

*Coat of Arms: A black chest of gold over a golden crown surrounded by water*

One of the most important battlegrounds during *The Darkhold*, the nation of Hoardens has never recovered from its tumultuous time 750 years ago. Long since replaced by Mandl as a major port for merchants traveling from the Deep Sea to the Wynding River Valley, Hoardens is now a cesspool of anger and resentment greatly influenced by its northern neighbor, Asnan, and threatened by the hulking shadow of the Kingdom of Vapraeth.

In the distant past, Hoardens was a scattered collection of forts established by the various powers of the Barren Peaks in the years before the *Demon Wars*. While some of the forts expanded into true hamlets and towns, others remained little more than keeps or even well defended warehouses. Those furthest inland were heavily manned to defend against the predations of monsters traveling the Barren Shadows and the growing power of the hobgoblins of the northern Vast. When the *Demon Wars* erupted, these forts were swiftly overwhelmed by the vying fiendish factions until, by 281 ADR, the forts were consolidated by powerful religious sects, well-armed pirates or

warlords, or by minor nobles from Asnan. These different sects would unite in the years preceding *The Darkhold* under the control the first toth, D'Larth Heuphanite. Needing a base to hoard his wealth from the prying eyes of Asnan and his other northern allies, D'Larth used his vast powers to force the inhabitants to his bidding in 465 of the Age of Revolutions. As a joke reflecting his needs, D'Larth named the new nation Hoardens. Hoardens prospered as a place of secret darkness until the waning days of *The Darkhold* when the Forces of Noon engaged the Forbidden Orders in the greatest battle before the *Siege of Mt. Oblivon*. The defenses of the Order were overrun and much of Hoardens was devastated. Hoardens has since struggled to recover a fifth of the wealth it once had under the rule of the Lariths.

Hoardens is ruled by those claiming descent from D'Larth Heuphanite. The Larth family owns most of the viable land in Hoardens and, as a result, much of the wealth. However, the Larth family is very dependant upon the good will of the people that claim to serve them. While the Larth family controls a large cavalcade of battle-trained servants, there are other prominent families that trace their heritage even further back than the Lariths and routinely test the strength of Larth hegemony. In recent years, however, the Larth family has proven more than capable of maintaining control and has even eradicated one rival family through apparently magical means.

Arcane magic dominates life in Hoardens. The more powerful members of Hoarden's population are Speakers of the Word, including the most prominent members of the Larth family. Religion plays a tertiary role in Hoardens after mercantile interests and arcane pursuits, although the towns closest to the Barren Shadows have the greatest religious connection. Virtually all the Aldra can be found in Hoardens, although the powers of Dauth Alman, Khamund, and Malvolans are ripe.

Hoarden's economy is heavily influenced by the traffic in its harbors. With the wealthiest shippers selecting the ports further south (particularly Mandl) since *The Darkhold*, Hoardens has slowly become more and more dilapidated. Although some Hoarders have established their own wares to trade, many have taken to thievery or to hunting for rare items within The Barren Shadows. Still others have taken to selling the poor or foolish visitors as slaves to the Kingdom of Vapraeth or even to Asnan and parts further north. Hoardens runs the risk of becoming a place of darkness ri-

valing Asnan and Tysunis if the economic situation does not turn swiftly. Despite their hard times, Hoarders have neither antipathy nor affection for other races, viewing them as all more or less the same. Hoarders seem to get along the best with hobgoblins, particularly those from Ugran as they view those from Vaprath as threats to their homeland. If there are any they seem to hate, it's the people of Mandl although they tread with care around Asnians and Tysunites.

Hoarders are slender but of average height with somewhat medium complexions and darker hair. They tend to prefer flashy attire and colors, with purples, bright blues, and rich reds being popular. They speak with great expression, are generally attractive, and seem far more intelligent and educated than they actually are.

## **The Vast Expanse**

### ***The Kingdom of Vaprath (hobgoblins)***

*Capital: Silver Sword*

*Important Locations: The Accursed Fields, The City of Dust, Plain of Falling Sand, The Gargantuan, Screaming Canyon*

*Coat of Arms: Sixteen silver swords with their points facing inwards, but not touching. At the center of the points is a drop of blood. All is on a white background.*

The Kingdom of Vaprath stands at the northeastern reaches of the Vast south of Mathborin's Curse. It is the second-largest hobgoblin homeland in Dm, although unlike the Duchies of Ugran, it is somewhat diverse with smatterings of sapiens, kin, and chirpto within its borders. The Kingdom of Vaprath is a relatively brutal place maintained by strict, heartless laws enforced by the autocratic rule of the King of Vaprath. Vaprath has long been a dangerous and conniving power in the Vast that has only been curtailed due to the power of the Duchies of Ugran to the north and the existence of Curoboria to the south. With Curoboria gone, Vaprath may eventually look to expand its borders by attacking the various independent cities and towns and the new formed Lands of the Pact.

The history of Vaprath is convoluted. According to the plays of the chirpto of the Barren Peaks, Vaprath is the name of a powerful warlord that ruled from the southern portions of Mathborin's Curse during the Age of Darkness. Through single-minded dedication, ferocity, and the support of

hobgoblin gods, Vaprath went to war against the other hobgoblin lands in the area, forcing them under his crown. In short order, he spread across the western Vast. Only the power of the Curoborian Empire stalled his spread southward while the Barren Peaks and the relatively unified forces of the Duchies of Ugran restricted his bid to push north. The plays also claim that Vaprath made a pact with the god Arunix, swearing his family's undying loyalty so long as they forever remained in power. Thus, the rule of Vaprath's kingdom remains with his family to this day.

How true these tales are is unknown since the powers in Vaprath do not readily share their histories. Indeed, all historical documents in Vaprath must be approved by the King or his designee(s). Vaprath is in many ways a hobgoblin variation of the feudal system practiced by the Kingdom of Bainland, although to a far more brutal degree. The King of Vaprath is the only free person in the entire kingdom, although those that serve him directly wield more freedom than others in the land. The king has eight Slavers, essentially the equivalent of dukes or princes, who defend his fiefs. These Slavers' lines are also hereditary, although they are magically compelled to do the bidding of the current king unless it is clear that the king's decrees are to the detriment of the kingdom. Alongside the Slavers are the Priest of Yellow Eyes, the worshippers of Arunix. Between these two factions, the King of Vaprath's power is absolute. On the one hand, both sides are magically compelled to obey their liege; in the other hand, both sides routinely challenge each other for dominance in the king's eyes. Beneath the Slavers and the Priest of the Yellow Eyes is a complex system of slave hierarchies. Those that serve in the military are the only commoners that receive any kind of hope for a decent life; all others are treated as little more than animals.

The Priests of the Yellow Eyes do not allow other religions to exist in Vaprath. Unlike the Duchies of Ugran, in which all hobgoblin gods are worshipped, the Kingdom of Vaprath only recognizes Arunix. The Priests of the Yellow Eyes advocate seasonal sacrifices of a fifth of all successes; those that cannot pay are expected to sacrifice the life of a loved one or one's own life. The Priests of the Yellow Eyes also control the military of Vaprath, making the kingdom a religious state.

The Kingdom of Vaprath trades heavily with the Duchies of Ugran, Asnan, and has historically traded with the sapien and duruban lands to the west and south. Vaprath was well known for its



armor and weapons, particularly swords, and for its corn products which contain minor magical properties. However, Vaprath was dependant upon Curoboria to buy most of their wares to maintain their economy. Although the kingdom has managed to remain solvent with the end of Curoboria, the King of Vaprath is looking for new ways to increase his kingdom's wealth and has recently opened trade with Mandl. Some suspect that this increased trade is simply an opportunity to determine the defenses of the south before an invasion.

The hobgoblins of Vaprath are a dour, but extremely hard working lot. They do not have the bravado of their northern cousins and are far more religious. They view the Duchies of Ugran as soft blasphemers and generally resent them. Although they trade with Asnan, Vaprathans regard them with disgust. Indeed, Vaprathans regard all other races with disgust in a manner strikingly similar to that of duruban. Still, if one travels into Vaprath and adheres to the very precise traditions of the kingdom, one will be treated with respect.

Vaprathan hobgoblins are not quite as tall as their northern cousins and tend to have much lighter fur. Males have prominent tusks. Attire is very formal with emblazoned tunics layering armor. The heavier and darker the armor and robes, the higher the hobgoblin's status as a slave to the King of Vaprath.

#### ***The Lands of the Pact (hobgoblins and sapien)***

*Capital: Maelstrom's Home*

*Important Locations: Ash Mountains, City of Stars, Furnace Swamp, Gurgling Plains, Forest of Steel, Ruins of Curoboria, Ruins of the Unblinking Eyes, Temple of Eternal Rage, Venom Bogs*

Spread across the south eastern range of The Vast, the Lands of the Pact consist of some of the oldest sapien civilizations in the continent-realm as well as the location of the largest number of duruban ruins. Indeed, the southern portions of the Lands of the Pact consisted of the center of the last great duruban kingdom in Drm, Curoboria. Although Curoboria disappeared over 250 years ago, the sapien and hobgoblin slaves and the few free non-duruban towns and hamlets along the outskirts of the defunct country have united under a potentially powerful collection of towns, cities, and even states.

The Lands of the Pact, or Pactlands, were instituted about 50 years ago. Prior to the Pact that

formed this very loose confederacy, Curoboria ruled over most of the southern and central Vast. In the days prior to *The Darkhold*, the Curoborians would raze the lands of non-duruban, killing inhabitants and purging the land of any indication of their existence. However, after *The Darkhold* Curoboria became less hostile; although they killed any non-duruban that dared to delve too closely to Curoboria proper, they did not leave their own cities and towns. This allowed the various sapien and hobgoblin populations to slowly develop. Scores of hamlets and towns dominated by sapiens, hobgoblins, and even mixed breeds formed near the center of the Vast. These people kept to themselves, aware of their ancestors' history with Curoboria and they never trusted that the peace with the duruban would last. Yet, the peace did last until 483 AE. Throughout that year, massive earthquakes and terrible storms rushed out of Curoboria for months. When what became known as the *Upheaval* ended late in 483, the duruban in the Vast (and across Drm) were never seen again. Although it took years before the various people of the Vast dared to explore the Ruins of Curoboria, they eventually realized that what they feared was apparently destroyed by some catastrophe and that the Vast was theirs to control.

It would be almost two hundred years before the Lands of the Pact were officially formed. To this day, there are no large cities in the Vast and many of the towns are no more than two generations old. Plagued by famine, drought, and plenty of wars, the people of the Vast are also not particularly sophisticated nor interested in expanding territory to the degree seen by other people. The Pact that would eventually unite the various towns and hamlets was not signed until a group of treasure seekers known as the Pact of Six arrived in the town now referred to as Maelstrom's Home. The Pact apparently killed a red Named One known as Desren the Despised who had been demanding monthly virginal sacrifices over the previous 50 years. After they killed Desren, the Pact took control of the larger towns and encouraged the people to create alliances to facilitate trade and mutual defense. Over 20 towns and hamlets agreed to this and signed the Pact in 147 CA (named in honor of the group); since another dozen towns have joined the Lands of the Pact.

Although the Pact of Six are the nominal rulers of the Lands of the Pact, they allow their subjects to rule themselves and have instituted few laws. However, the Pact of Six has defended the Pact against the aggressions of rival Vast towns and

the Kingdom of Vapraeth. Very little beyond the Pact of Six unites the Lands of the Pact, not even religion.

A wide swath of gods is worshipped in the Lands. Many towns claim a patron god or even a cosmic entity. In the past, quite a few of the conflicts between various towns and hamlets stemmed from religious fervor. Since the Pact, however, such aggression has reduced significantly. Purin Sundancer, a member of the Pact of Six who lives in the town called Grey Wildes, is a powerful worshipper of Vhanthermis, the god of justice. She has built a large temple to her god, but has yet to enforce worship of Vhanthermis on the people of the Pact.

The various towns of the Pact are self-sufficient and rarely trade with each other much less with the outside world. What little they can produce from the heavily damaged soil of the Vast they keep for themselves. However, Arlton Clovenstrike, the dwarven warrior of the Pact of Six, believes that the Ash Mountains hold a wealth of minerals, precious metals, and other natural resources. In recent years, pottery from some of the western-most towns has found success in Mandl.

The People of the Pact, as they tend to refer to each other, are a motley crew. Since a great deal of their past is unknown to them, they have very little in the way of tradition other than tenacity and the will to survive. They are distrustful of others, even those from nearby towns. They are extremely superstitious and fear magic of any sort; most Speakers of The Word live outside of towns. The few that have cause to travel to cities like Mandl are in awe of what they encounter, but they tend to prefer a simple life and rarely allow the lives of others to overwhelm them. They have no ill will towards any particular race and treat all outsiders with an equal degree of rudeness.

Hobgoblins in the Pact are usually smaller than those from anywhere else Under the Crown and usually have dull gray hair. They are often prone to be more violent than others of their kind. Kin are likewise smaller here, but also stronger and more aggressive. Sapiens, by contrast, tend to be a little larger, heavier, and very confrontational.

### ***Havenspeak (elves and sapiens)***

*Capital: Mount Havenspeak*

*Important Locations: City of Stars, Despair's Walk, Light's Glen, Hallowed Fields, Mount Havenspeak, Print of the Gauntlet, Ride of the Wind,*

*Shadowed Corner, Solace Hill, Steppes of Heaven*  
*Coat of Arms: Fourteen white stars above a golden mountain on a blue field.*

Once a refuge for elves and sapiens traveling the treacherous lands of the duruban, the quiet towns and hamlets that constitute Havenspeak are now a place of solace and study for those dedicated to goodness and peace. Havenspeak is the oldest established nation in the Vast Expanse and is likely the origin point for Glidian worship and the Mandlite people that have so greatly impacted Drm. Although far better known now than in the distant past, Havenspeak is still a quiet, almost quaint place that holds numerous opportunities for those of patience and perseverance.

No one knows when Havenspeak was founded, although most believe that it was populated by sapiens well before even the founding of Vhendimmoth. What is almost a certainty is that much of the land within Havenspeak was blessed by the good Aldra, particularly those considered part of the Glidian pantheon, Alleris, Celzar, Ganlarid, Lanira, Nemaria, and Helias (as well as their evil counterparts, particularly Dauth Alman and Bythal Dalax). While some of the inhabitants of Havenspeak would found Mandl, others would travel into the Wynding River Valley and even into Vhendimmoth. What constitutes modern Havenspeak can be traced to *The Darkhold*. Havenspeak long stood as a beacon of hope in the Vast Expanse against the Forbidden Orders, making it a target of the Forbidden Orders. The Demon Queen Ostensis led the armies Forbidden Orders into Havenspeak to destroy it but it was saved by the Forces of Noon. Ostensis was banished during the *Bloody Fields of Havenspeak*, an act of goodness that strengthened whatever ties the land had to the Realms Above. Now, Havenspeak is a hallowed place of mediation for all dedicated to good Aldra.

Havenspeak is ruled by the Council of the Haven, the mayors of the various towns. Each town, of which there are 14, operates as it will, although most outsiders fail to see much distinction among them. All of the towns do share the protection offered by the Havenwatch, men and women that spend their lives traveling the lands of Havenspeak. This life-long calling involves a significant amount of training in unarmed combat in order to reduce the risk for lethal combat, although they will kill if no other option remains. Since the end of *The Darkhold*, Havenwatch was expanded to

include Speakers of the Word and other highly skillful groups. Whether this means a new kind of authority for the group in the near future is unclear. The training ground for the Havenwatch near the Steppes of Heaven. Aside from membership in Havenwatch or service on a mayor's council, the most prestigious role one can assume is prominent place in one of the churches.

Although the people of Havenspeak are usually worshippers of the Glidian pantheon, the authority of the churches is not as prominent as one would expect. Making sacrifices and paying tithes to the churches is expected of all good Havenians, as is regular participation in religious observances. The different churches practice a friendly rivalry, although since the middle of the Age of Enlightenment, worship of Celzar has waned in favor of Nemaria and, even more recently, Helias.

Havenspeak is essentially self-sufficient. The bulk of the populace are field farmers and homesteaders. Cattle and horses are probably the greatest trade items Havenians have to offer to others. Havenspeak does experience many visitors from abroad, particularly from the Lands of the Pact and the Wynding River Valley. Most travel here to explore the hallowed grounds scattered across the area. Havenians view these visitors with bemusement; although they don't take their land for granted, they are used to the wonders so close to their homes. Havenians are not particularly suspicious of outsiders as they are accustomed to them; still, they tread with care around those with whom they're unfamiliar. Havenians have no love for the Kingdom of Vaprath or for the lands on the Deep Sea. They view Mandlites as a bit uppity and are curious to see what occurs with the new Lands of the Pact. They do not miss Curoboria and view hobgoblins as little better than duruban. Chirpto are regarded with awe. Many elves live in Havenspeak, so there are plenty of half-elves; most elves are of the B'Ain variety. Havenians respect dwarves; very few live in the towns but frequently pass through on business. Kin are slightly more numerous than elves, most living in the southern portions of Havenspeak. Somehow, the kin of Havenspeak are close to being sedentary.

Havenians are average in height with pinkish skin and hair that ranges from blonde to dark brown. They often dress in very simple clothes, tunics and slacks being popular; the wealthier citizens often supplement their attire with cloaks and doublets.

### ***Mandl (every race but dominated by sapiens)***

*The Cities of Coin*

*Capital: The Shining Spire*

*Important Locations: Columns of Majesty, Hallowed Square of the Heroes of Noon, The Pillars of Might, Plains of Reckoning, Sea's Home Port, Seers' Library, Solacepoint, Thorn's Keep, Way of the Gods.*

*Coat of Arms: A silver coin, gold coin, and platinum coin above a white tower on a royal blue field.*

One of the wealthiest countries Under the Crown, Mandl is also the most unique. A series of sprawling metropolises that stretch from Bainland Inlet into the midst of the Vast Expanse, Mandl is the one place in Drm even more diverse than Ash-tur. All races and all professions can be found in Mandl in relative peace. Simultaneously, Mandl is also part of the Ministry, serving as the theocracy's northernmost component. The fact that Mandl exists as one of the most open societies in Drm whilst being a part of a relatively conservative religious organization is a testament to its openness and adaptability.

What constitutes Mandl was established in 388 of the Age of Enlightenment; however, the history of the area stretches back since the Age of Mist for it was here that the first large sapien settlements were established long before Fortens the Founder conceived his empire. Although not considered as sacred to the Glidian pantheon as nearby Havenspeak, the land surrounding present-day Mandl was rich in natural resources and seemed blessed. Known as the Mandlites, these people established numerous independent hamlets and towns came and went over the centuries, sometimes swallowed by duruban, hobgoblin, monsters, or non-Mandlite sapiens. By the Age of Enlightenment, the continent-realm was much smaller as the dwarves began to provide their printing press to others. With the various Wynding River Valley lands seeking new resources from the north and with the north still recovering from the *Demon Wars* and *Dragonhold*, the lands in the Mandl area saw increased traffic by all races. Only the threat of Curoboria hindered this growth. In order to facilitate a new trade paradigm, representatives from the Duchies of Ugran, the Kingdom of Bainland; the Kingdom of Vaprath; the Kingdoms of A'Grabath, B'Ain, and Sal-T'Alimar; and the Republic of Burquebain made arrangements to meet in the largest town in Mandl, Glorium to establish well-protected trade routes.

In the spring of 388, Glorium was joined by six other towns to create the nation of Mandl. The new capital, The Shining Spire, was completed in 392 by dwarven, elven, hobgoblin, and sapiens, the only place to exhibit such unity in Drm. Defended by the Noon Alliance in the south and the combined might of the Duchies of Ugran and the Kingdom of Vaprath in the north, Mandl became a relatively safe meeting place for all interested parties. Mandl became the second most important country in Drm after *The Darkhold*, replacing Hoardens as the most important port for ships sailing into the south. Although the hobgoblins have essentially abandoned their protective role in Mandl, the Cities of Coin remain the economic and intellectual hub of the Lands Under the Chain.

Mandl practices a mixture of democratically elected representatives under a hereditary line of rulers. While most of the true control of the country falls under the Circle of Coins, the head of state has been and remains the eldest member of the Glorium family who is referred to as the Potentate of the Spire. The Circle of Coins are elected by all citizens from among the various guilds and trade associations in Mandl, although there have been cases of unassociated Coinholders in the past. The Circle of Coins typically numbers 100 members, although the Potentate of the Spire can enlarge or shrink the size as he or she sees fit. The Onyx Guard is the army and police. Answering to the Circle of Coins, the Onyx Captain is selected by the Potentate of the Spire. Finally, the Crowns of the Cities serve as the regional lords and courts. Selected by the Potentate of the Spire and approved by the Circle of Coins, the seven Crowns rule the individual cities. There are plenty of other powers in Mandl, including various groups associated with the elven kingdoms, Burquebain, and the Ministry. Another growing power are the Seers, gatherers of information who have inadvertently stymied corruption in the Circle of Coins and questioned the activities of the government and even private companies in their writs and pamphlets.

The Ministry is technically the official religion of Mandl, although its influence is limited. Indeed, there are significant conflicts between the Ministry's belief system regarding the Faces of Celzar and the Four Archangels and older attitudes about the Glidian pantheon, in which Celzar is just one god of many. This, alongside the fact that Mandl supports such a diverse population, has allowed numerous other religions to take hold in Mandl with limited government or even Ministerial interference so long as the groups are respect-

ful of laws. Indeed, Mandl lies with Bainland as one of the larger Ministry countries in which arcane magic is practiced fairly openly.

Mandl serves a trade center more than a producer of trade items. Wares from across Drm are bought and sold in Mandl and the ports are always full. It could be said that between Ashtur, Mandl, and Valdeze, trade in Drm flourishes. What wares Mandl does produce is usually limited to things that only the wealthy can buy, like quality paper, inks, clothing, and new items like rubber and something referred to as plastic. The fact that these items came out of Mandl rather than Burquebain suggests that Mandl may evolve from a trade center to a developer of new trends.

The people of Mandl are referred to as Mandels, which is different from the ancient Mandlites that settled in portions of the Wynding River Valley and even in the Golden Plains. A Mandel may be of any race born in Mandl or one who petitions for citizenship. As a result, Mandels are very open-minded with regards to race and tend to view people as individuals with certain racial expectations. Mandels are as sophisticated as Ashturian and Valds and almost as well-read; however, they often seem self-absorbed, greedy, and interested in gossip. In recent years, many have become increasingly skeptical of their government and the Ministry.

There is no one way to describe Mandels as a whole since all races are represented here. Those that claim a lineage to the Mandlites tend to strongly resemble Havenians.

## The Wynding River Valley

### **Valdeze (*sapiens*)**

*Capital:* Valernus

*Important Locations:* *Aqueducts, Ecclesiastical Towers, Happy Hills, Molus Hill, Reddenwood, Seawall of the Archlord, Silver Blood of Valernus, The Spiral Towers, Valernus Library, Wall of Valernus*

*Coat of Arms:* *The Diving Eagle, a stylized white eagle on a gold sky diving into blue and white water.*

Although neither the richest nor the most advanced society Under the Crown, Valdeze is arguably the most important and influential nation, having taken advantage of new technology and ideas

from across the continent-realm. Populated with people dedicated to improving their lot in life through virtually any means, Valdeze is committed to leading the charge into a bright future for itself and the rest of Drm.

Valdeze is one of the youngest of Drm's larger nations. Lying in the middle of land once contested by vying factions of duruban, elves, and sapiens, Valdeze was created due to the cooperation between elves and sapiens. Valdeze was founded as an extension of the Kingdom of Bainland in 804 AG. Under the power of the first Archlord, Valernus, Valdeze was populated by the extensive co-mingling of elven and sapien blood. This reluctance to adhere to tradition paved the way for Valdeze's eventual split from the Kingdom of Bainland during the *Bloody Revolt* of 1022 AG. Valdeze became an independent nation by 1023 AG. Over time, Valdeze shed what little remained of Bainland culture and elven influences, becoming its own entity. A feature of Valdeze's uniqueness lies in its democratically elected rulers.

Valdeze is ruled by the High Court, composed of 15 representatives from the five cities. These Justices are in turn guided by the High Justice and the Lines of Bureaucrats. Although invested with a tremendous amount of power, the High Court's members are subject to the will of the people and the will of the various trade groups that seek to increase their holdings. Furthermore, although is not overwhelmingly powerful in Valdeze as in other lands, the nobility, along with the wealthy individuals, all play a role in the decision and laws determined by the High Court. The High Court shares its power with other entities as well, including the Lord Mayors of the five cities, and the Ministry.

The Ministry is extremely strong in Valdeze despite Valds' tendency towards independence. Valds value individual responsibility and empowerment, something the Ministry supports through its hatred for The Word and its desire to eradicate unfairness. Additionally, the Ministry supports the spread of sapiens throughout the area, something Valds believe will increase their holdings and strengthen their way of life. Among the beings worshipped in the Ministry, the Archangel Nemaria is considered the patron deity of Valdeze, although all Valds swear a pledge to Celzar.

Business is the driving component of life in Valdeze. Valds tend to view financial success as evidence of individual hard work and perseverance. Valdeze dominates trade in cement, cotton,

and tobacco, as well as in limestone and knowledge. Huge trading conglomerates dominate international trade in Valdeze, and influence the High Court. Chief among these is the Gilded Chalice.

Valds are a proud group of people, although they tend to avoid outright arrogance. They have a tendency to believe strongly in what is right, what is wrong, and what is their own. As such, over the centuries, Valdeze has become an enemy to the elves of Wyrmspine Hills over settling rights in the so-called Claimed Lands, which resulted in two *Claimed Land Wars*. This enmity has widened into full-blown hatred to their distant relatives, as well as a general disdain for all non-sapiens. Still, Valds are on excellent terms with Burquebain and other races like chirpto, hobgoblins, and kin are seen in Valdeze from time to time. Valds detest and fear arcane magic, and feel only a little better about divine magic, viewing any form of magic as detrimental to honest work and as subverting the province of Celzar and his Angels. Valds usually view Bainlanders as boisterous country-bumpkins, Quasites as greedy zealots, and Esels as infidels; in fact, Valds despise Esels and most people in Worm's Wood as much as they do elves.

Valds tend to average height, olive to light complexions, and light-colored hair – a betrayal of their elven heritage. Valds usually dress comfortably, although travels into major cities tend to result in more formal attire, particularly flowing gowns for women and robes for men. Hats and similar accoutrements are extremely popular in Valdeze.

### ***The Kingdom of Bainland (sapiens)***

*"The Green Kingdom," "The Old Kingdom"*

*Capital: Nar Narth Karthrike*

*Important Locations: B'Ain Enclaves, Castle Barthrod, DeLeon Purge, Fortress Ecth Lesond, Fortress Nar Narth Karthrike, The Great Green, Gulf of Bainland, Ironoak Battalion, Krine Forest, The Sacred Fortresses, Strait of Kings, Towers of Vigilance*

*Coat of Arms: Emerald Green Throne between two white swords on a deep green field (each Duke and virtually every Landed Noble has his own Coat of Arm as well)*

The Kingdom of Bainland once boasted the wealthiest nobles, most powerful warriors, and the largest appetites. Now, relegated to a seat behind that of Valdeze, Quasii, and Mandl in the Ministry,

Bainland is a land of ancient regrets and populated by those who would see the Green Kingdom return to its former status.

The land occupied by the Kingdom of Bainland has changed hands numerous times. Held by sapiens from the Mandlite region, then held by duruban of the Uruba Empire, and then contested by the duruban and the A'Grabath and B'Ain elves for centuries, Bainland has ever been a land of turmoil and conflict. The roots of present day Bainland are found in the years after the *Demon Wars* when weary travelers fleeing genocide in the north arrived on the peninsula in the middle of the Age of Darkness. Joining forces with the elves against the duruban, these newcomers united under their mightiest and wisest warrior, Karthrike Truthshammer, and drove the duruban out of the peninsula. In 630 AD, when Karthrike Truthshammer was crowned king, the Kingdom of Bainland was founded.

There is not a single place in Drm wherein feudal political struggling, intrigue, and maneuvering take place with greater intensity than in Bainland. While the King of Bainland rules from his Green Throne, he must constantly guard against the machinations of the other three lines of rulers, the Dukes of Bainland. Each of these entities maintains tremendous courts that are in perpetual conflict with each other. A number of features make Bainland's nobility unique. First, a noble granted land and status from one of the Dukes or King becomes a Landed Noble, abandoning his given name for the name of the land he rules. Second, there is a clear chain of command and lines of fealty between the various lieges and vassals; although the King rules, a Landed Noble is almost certainly more dedicated to his Duke rather than his King. Finally, the various commoners are not kept out of these continual machinations, participating with zeal for their liege. Despite the eternal intrigue that marks Bainland politics, the King and the Dukes all unite against any external threat to the Green Kingdom.

The power of the King and the Dukes is so great in Bainland that, although Bainland is considered part of the Ministry, Ministers and Ministerial Doctrine have never fully solidified in Bainland. Bainlanders cling to older concepts associated with Celzar and the various Archangels, concepts considered heretical to the Glass Towers. However, Bainland's control of the Strait of Kings forces the Ministry to treat with the taciturn nobles of Bainland cautiously. Among the beings recognized by Bainlanders, Celzar is the

most important to Bainland, although in the past another Archangel called Alleris was considered Bainland's patron.

Bainland is known for its timber, dogs, horses, beer, and armor. Bainland also boasts a large and very strong navy that guards Strait of Kings. Bainland's King receives a tremendous amount of income from taxing the straits. The only option into the south of Drm besides the Straits of Kings is to take the Wynding River or by land; either case results in a slower and potentially less profitable journey. To this day, trade in Bainland is controlled by the Landed Nobles, but a middle class is slowly forming in Bainland. There are numerous mercenary groups in Bainland who serve the will of the various nobles, ensuring that their wares are transported without interference from other nobles.

Pomp, circumstance, and tradition rule Bainlanders. Bainlander commoners are dedicated to the will of the Landed Nobles, knowing that their fate is inextricably linked to their lords. Bainlanders are superstitious and very in touch with the magic of the continent-realm to a degree rivaled in the Ministry only by Carthron. Unsurprisingly, there continue to be Speakers of the Word in the Green Kingdom, many serving Landed Nobles if they don't carry a title themselves.

Physically, Bainlanders combine the height and skin tone of their northern ancestors with the dark hair and eyes of most southern Sapiens. Bainlanders are incredibly tall, very muscular, and compact; men favor a lot of facial hair and women tend to be busty. Bainlanders prefer to wear rich earth tones, green being complimented with bronze, gold, and purple. Bainlanders view all other races with a bit of awe, particularly elves. Elves continue to live in the forests of Bainland in small enclaves. The King of Bainland treats these enclaves within his Kingdom with respect. There are also a fair number of goblins and similar beings in the forests that dominate Bainland.

### ***Quasii (sapiens)***

*Capital: Quasii*

*Important Locations: Gates of Quasii, The Glass City, The Glass Towers, Grim Towers, Pointed Towers, Ruins of Durok, Sarahaz' Gift, Sacred Forest, Temple of Winds*

*Coat of Arms: A silver crown resting on five silver pillars on a green field*

For god, for glory, and for gold. Statements of this sort best describe the attitude that dominates the country of Quasii. A wealthy country bent on conquest and the acquisition of more gold, Quasii is also the center of Drm's most powerful religion, the Ministry. Increasingly more identified with the Ministry, Quasites firmly believe that their dedication to their god ensures their eventual hegemony not just Under the Crown of Burquebain, but across all of Drm and eventually Midlorr itself.

The land upon which Quasii lies was once the center of a great duruban empire called Uruba. Through wars against elves and the sapiens of the ancient Vhendimmothian Empire, Uruba eventually fell. The cities of Uruba were razed, and would serve as fertilizer for the sapiens that settled there. In time, the desire for greater territory, increased wealth, and mutual protection caused these sapiens to unite under one banner; Quasii was founded in 822 ASR through a series of treaties drafted by the five largest cities in the area.

Quasii rivals the Kingdom of Bainland with its degree of noble intrigue. Ruled by the Premiere of Quasii, usually referred to as The Dothan, Quasii maintains a powerful upper class and dozens of noble families. While some serve as Wardens of one of the cities, others serve The Dothan directly, forming his Pillar. The Pillars of Quasii deal with matters of importance as they relate to taxing and policing, but leave the people to their own business pursuits so long as these do not disrupt the flow of income to The Dothan. However, many beyond Quasii believe that it is not The Dothan, his Pillars, nor the Wardens of the Cities who rule Quasii; these doubters point to the Ond as the ruler of Quasii.

As the infallible religious leader of the Ministry, the Ond is the single most powerful figure in Quasii, and throughout the Wynding River Valley, and some parts beyond. Ruling from the Glass City in Quasii, the Ond and his Circle of Grand Ministers determine and guide the religious values of the Ministry and thereby influence the attitudes and beliefs of the lands dominated by the Ministry. Still, the Ond and the Ministry take pains not to interfere with strictly carnal matters that may affect Quasii, leaving such mundane concerns to The Dothan and his subordinates.

Still, at times the goals of the Ministry and The Dothan parallel each other. While the Ministry seeks to expand its message to the rest of the continent-realm Quasii hopes to expand its political and economic power. Trade and commerce

and the driving factors of Quasii life; Quasites will do virtually anything within the bounds of Quasii law and Ministry Doctrine to increase their personal holdings, even to the detriments of others. Quasii benefits spectacularly from Wynding River tariffs; Quasii is also known for cotton and vegetable crops.

Quasites are considered cold, ruthless, and self-righteous by even their allies within the Ministry. They believe that they have been chosen by Celzar to lead the vanguard of a new order. They are so certain of this that they are willing to go to war to prove it. Quasites are fanatic about their adherence to Ministry Doctrine, regularly seeking out and punishing heretics and blasphemers. Quasites detest elves, kin, gnomes, hobgoblins, and chirpto; they tolerate dwarves. As a whole, Quasites are envious of the wealth of Valdeze and Mandl. They hate Sal-Emprians. Quasites are of average height, tend towards light skin, and have a wide range of hair and eye color. They tend to dress with refined simplicity, favoring lighter colors with metallic sheens, and only carry weapons when they leave their nation.

#### **Sambs (sapiens)**

*Capital:* N/A

*Important Locations:* Dimm's Vale, Giant's Run, Moonbearer Crag, Ruins of Brond, Struggling Sea

*Coat of Arms:* Originally a green dragon holding the moon on a red banner; now a gold dragon rising above a forest

A land contested by the Kingdom of Eselix and the Ministry, Sambs stands on the precipice of fate. Once known as Fang's Reach and ruled by Worm's Wood nobles with ties to the Eselix, the Ministry, recently removed the former rulers and installed new leadership loyal to the Glass Towers. Now, conflict reigns in what is now called Sambs as the angry powers of Worm's Wood seek to either free what they still refer to Fang's Reach from Ministry control or else burn it to the ground.

Fang's Reach was originally one of the smaller cities in Worm's Wood and a somewhat important trade partner with Quasii when the latter sought opportunities in northern Worm's Wood towns. Over the past few years, increased tensions over religion and trade resulted in the first *Claimed Land War* of 147 CA when a prominent Quasite merchant, Sambs Heavshire, was killed by Raiders of Worm's Wood near Fang's Reach. The Ministry,

with significant backing from Quasii and Valdeze, went to war against the Kingdom of Eselix and the elves of Wyrmspine. By 154 CA, Eselix sued for peace as the war crippled its limited cohesion and fragile economic resources. The Claimed Land Treaty was forged which abdicated prime farming land to the Ministry, Quasii, and Valdeze. However, in the winter of 154, Quasii marched forces into Fang's Reach to redress the death of Sambs Heavshire despite this not being part of the bargain. Although the furious powers of Worm's Wood could do little to stop this, this act would ensure that peace would never be maintained and would play a role in the second *Claimed Lands War*. Despite efforts from the Worm's Wood, the new city-state of Sambs remains a protectorate of Quasii and part of the Ministry.

The former rulers of Sambs either fled or were captured and executed by Quasii in 154. Now Sambs is ruled by the High Warden. Since the establishment of the new city, the position of High Warden has been a hereditary line of the Heavshires. Although the High Warden is ostensibly the single most powerful man in Sambs, in truth he is dependant upon the goodwill of both Quasii and the Ministry. To date a few lowly nobles from Quasii and Valdeze have relocated to Sambs in search of greater power here than they have in their own homelands. A few have grown to prominence while others have faltered. Those few nobles of Worm's Wood origins that swore fealty to the High Warden and have accepted Redemption from Celzar are second-class nobles at best and impotent title-holders at worst. Many of these nobles are aligned with other powerful families in Worm's Wood and many have ties to the Raiders of Worm's Wood. Although quite a few have been arrested and hung for treason, many continue to support any move to remove Ministry control of their land.

The Ministry is the true power in Sambs, providing the city with a great deal of protection. It has been through Ministry direction that Sambs has not only survived but managed to prosper. The Lord Minister of Sambs is consulted in all actions by the High Warden and his forces and, to date, still controls the police of the city, the Warders of Justice, a branch of the Riders of Justice.

Sambs is a place of conflict. While most of the rulers have foreign blood, the citizens are Wormers in every sense. They are superstitious, untrusting, and wary of their rulers. They also hate the Ministry and anything associated with it. Thus, the city is strongly divided in terms of cul-

ture. The rulers have little understanding of the ways of the ruled and the ruled loathe their new rulers even more than their former. There is a slowly growing middle group, those born under the new regime who understand both sides, but invariably are forced to choose one over the other.

The rulers of Sambs strongly resemble Quasites, although they tend to be thinner and more athletic. The commoners are shorter and swarthy. While the nobility of Quasii descent dress in the refined simplicity of their forebears, those who claim Wormer heritage are more rugged in their dress.

### ***Sal-Emprius (elves and sapiens)***

*Capital: Sal-Aldrannat*

*Important Locations: The Black Canal, Cathedral of the Orb, Forest of Tears, Mordrain's Pass, Ruins of Sal-Tormmorian, Temple of Eternal Dawn, Wastes of Darco, Whispering Gardens*

*Coat of Arms: A grey dragon holding a white scepter in its talons on a black field.*

Cities obsessed with a long dead past and convinced of their exalted future comprise Sal-Emprius, or the Union of the New Empire. Lying along the stretch of land between Mordrain's Pass and the Forest of Tears, Sal-Emprius is a place that claims access to ancient wonders. Faith in these claims has helped the people of the Union achieve enough power to stave off the desires of the Ministry, although some have become consumed by their own beliefs.

The origins of Sal-Emprius are found in the Age of Despair just after the Fall of Fortens' Keep when the survivors of the cities of Kymor and Tormmorian fled into Quasii seeking succor. Dealing with its own troubles, Quasii instituted a Branding of the survivors in 24 ADE. Effectively third class citizens, the Vhendimmothian refugees were horribly abused and, by 39 ADE, their leaders warred against the Pillars of Quasii. The *War of the Branded* ended in 40 ADE when the Crin's Sacred, Anninarcus the Grim, pressed the Dothan to end his dispute with the Kingdom of Bainland over a stretch of land to the west (which was itself still held by smatterings of duruban). The two countries established a treaty that also allowed the refugees to settle this land. Sal-Tormmorian was founded in 42 ADE. By 200 ADE, four other cities joined Sal-Tormmorian to form the Union of the New Empire, Sal-Emprius. Claiming to adhere to the true culture of dead Vhendimmoth, the peo-



ple of the Union isolated themselves from those that had not helped them, currying a deep resentment towards the people of Quasii that persists to this very day. In a precursor of the *Claimed Lands War*, Sal-Tormmorian was destroyed in magical conflagration during the *War of the Wynding Hills* between Sal-Emprius and the Ministry in 410 AE. This event continues to color the relations between the Union and the lands of the Ministry.

Claiming descent from the Emperors of Vhendimmoth, the Imperial Seneschals are the extremely paranoid rulers of Sal-Emprius, trusting no one other than those Branded to their family. A form of indentured servitude that has its roots in their time in Quasii, Branding is used to determine to which Imperial Seneschal family non-nobles belong. Branding is a life-long association; to many, being without a brand is like being lost. The more brands, the greater the honor, although some brands are implemented as punishment. While there are dozens of Imperial Seneschal families, there have historically been five or six that dominate the Union at any one time. These five or six have changed little over the centuries. The rivalries between the Imperial Seneschals are fierce and only external threats can motivate them to work together. There is only one agency completely independent of the Imperial Seneschals and that is the Imperial Guard. Commanded by eight hereditary lines that harkens back to various heroes of the Branding known as the Imperial Guides, the Imperial Army protects Sal-Emprius as a whole, technically having no ties to any Imperial family. Somehow, the strain and pull between the various Imperial Seneschals and the Imperial Guides manages to ensure that no one group becomes too powerful. Yet, even the religious orders are sensitive to the waxing and waning of the Imperial Seneschals and Guides.

During the Age of Enlightenment, the religious orders of Sal-Emprius were almost subsumed into the Imperial Seneschals. Only the *War of the Wynding Hills* and the destruction of Sal-Tormmorian allowed the religious orders to reestablish their independence. For most of Sal-Emprius' existence, the Thrones of Thore Mire dominated religious expression. However, after the creation of the Ministry, certain factions of churches of Aldra that were subsumed into the new religion fled Quasii and Valdeze, establishing new churches in the Union. These churches, particularly those dedicated to Celzar, Lanira, and Nemaria, have become powerful in their own right. The largest churches to Lanira and Nemaria in Drm, the Whispering Gardens and the Temple of

Eternal Light, are in Sal-Emprius while the formidable battlement, the Cathedral of the Orb, is home to some of the most militant worshippers of Celzar. These churches have developed bitter rivalries not just with each other, but with the Imperial Seneschals and Imperial Guides; only the threat of the Ministry has kept them from battling each other for greater power.

Sal-Emprians are a suspicious, conspiratorial lot dedicated to their own promotion. Emprians are insular to the extreme, clinging to their families and towns, followed by their brand or church. This mixture of arrogance and selfishness has allowed Sal-Emprius to become an almost completely self-sustained nation. A hardy people, there is little that they find the need to import and do not believe in trade with most of their neighbors. What little they trade is timber and exotic meats. Emprians also sell heavily in tales of the past. Emprians claim access to ancient dungeons and dangerous forests. Indeed, there are many duruban ruins in the area from the time the Emprians did battle with duruban when they settled in the area. Travelers and treasure-seekers from across Drm eagerly travel to the New Empire to seek out these places and Emprians usually ignore them so long as they pay well and do not get involved in their affairs.

The only Ministerial land with which the nation as a whole has any trade arrangement with is Bainland. Emprians consider themselves to be at war with Quasii and loathe the Ministry. Their neighbors to the south, Mordrain's Keep, also receives little in the way of consideration from Emprians, although they treat them well enough to take advantage of opportunities with Bagwin. Emprians have a generally neutral to all other races; however a large number of L'Istona elves live in the Forest of Tears and are considered as brethren by the Emprians. Indeed, quite a few Imperial Guards are elves.

Emprian sapiens are slightly taller than average height and have brown skin, dark eyes, and darker hair. They tend to simple tunics and boots, although robes are not uncommon among the wealthy.

### **Worm's Wood**

#### ***The Kingdoms of Wyrmspine Hills (elves)***

*Capital: Mount Anoint*

*Important Locations: Copse Scale Path, Dragon Essence Lake, Drake's Maw Reach, Silent Valley, Talonpoint*

Once a powerful force in Worm's Wood and welcomed in the lands of Valdeze, the A'Grabath and B'Ain elves now rule a sliver of rocky land in the Wyrmspine Hills and the wooded valleys therein. The elves, particularly the A'Grabath, have all but abandoned peaceful interaction with sapiens beyond Worm's Wood and even their relationships with those in Worm's Wood have deteriorated over the past few decades.

The Kingdoms of Wyrmspine Hills have been existence in one form or another since the Age of Humen when the A'Grabath and B'Ain abandoned the S'Grieyl Empire during the *Family Wars* and traveled into Worm's Wood. There, they ran afoul of dragons and other aulspawn and the earliest duruban predecessors of Uruba. Although viewing themselves as two distinct groups, the two elven families found cause to unite against their aggressors and survived. While the B'Ain dominated Worm's Wood and the northern reaches of Agrabathor, the A'Grabath controlled the western and southern portions of the jungle and parts throughout the northern Golden Plains of the time, brining it into conflict with the Curoborian Empire and Vhendimmoth. Both elves suffered numerous defeats for hundreds of years and the A'Grabath were forced to join their northern neighbors at the end of the *Golden Plains Wars*. After the Kingdom of Bainland aided the elves in the removal of the Curoborian Empire from Worm's Wood in Age of Darkness, the B'Ain and A'Grabath parted ways for a time, the former taking the western areas of the Woods and the latter the eastern. With the collapse of the Noon Alliance during the Age of Glory and the rise of independent towns and cities in Worm's Wood and the Wynding River Valley, the elves saw their forests shrink. After *The Darkhold*, the B'Ain fled the western portions of what are now called the Krine Forest and Reddenwood to join their cousins in Worm's Wood. The A'Grabath and the B'Ain united with the sapiens of Worm's Wood twice against the Ministry, Valdeze, and Quasii in an attempt to retain land sacred for the elven blood spilt, only to lose both times.

The A'Grabath and B'Ain still barely cling to distinctions among the two groups. Generally speaking the A'Grabath tend to the hills themselves and have no love for sapiens regardless of origins, while the B'Ain keep to the valleys and glades and regularly travel Worm's Wood. Both groups long since abandoned the notion of different kingdoms within their larger group, now just recognizing two. Rather than have one king, however, the elves of Wyrmspine have the Valley Watchers, a group of well-regarded elves that offer

guidance to the greater population. Outsiders do not know the identities of those that sit on the Valley Watchers, although it is known that most of them are of A'Grabath descent.

The elves have a strong preference for Riaarla and Yalarama over Talamas. The former is the goddess of the hunt, the most feral of the elven gods and most often propiated by the A'Grabath; the B'Ain offer veneration to Yalarama, especially those that travel into Worm's Wood. Clerics of Riaarla have grown in power over the past couple centuries, urging more aggression from elves in order to save their homes.

The Kingdoms of Wyrmspine trade only with the towns and cities of Worm's Wood and even then, most of the trade is conducted by the B'Ain. By far, most trade is done with the Gnome Glades and Eselix, although the towns of Broadbend and Wyrms Vale often entertain elven visitors. The elves provide medicinal items and fruits found only in the hills.

The elves of Wyrmspine are more rugged than their kin elsewhere. They envy the elves of Sal-T'Alimar; oddly, they do not resent them but have historically refused offered aid from their distant cousins. Although they don't hate sapiens, they have little good to say about most of them. The closest they come to hate is in their attitudes towards Valds and Quasites. The elves are ambivalent towards dwarves. Chirpto are regarded with suspicion and hobgoblins are immediately attacked, subdued, and relocated. The only race the elves killed with little hesitation were duruban. Elves get along with readily are gnomes. Non-elves or non-gnomes traveling their lands uninvited are likely to be severely injured, although rarely killed, unless a known friend. To date, only a few merchants and noble families in Worm's Wood are accorded such a distinction.

It is likely that within a few decades that the two families will combine to form a new elven subgroup.

### ***The Silent Groves (gnomes)***

*Capital:* N/A

*Important Locations:* N/A

Scattered throughout Worm's Wood like fallen acorns, the Silent Groves are the dozen or so hidden dens and hamlets of gnomes. Protected by powerful illusionary magic, the Groves are rarely stumbled upon and have protected the gnomes of

Worm's Wood for as long as can be remembered. It has only been in recent years that the gnomes have taken to dealing directly with their neighbors.

No one knows how long the gnomes have lived in Worm's Wood, although most scholars accept that the Silent Groves themselves probably did not appear until the end of the Age of Darkness. With the Curoborian Empire severely crippled after their disastrous war against Karthrike Truthshammer and his elven allies and the eventual demise of the few remaining dragons that claimed territory, the gnomes would have the opportunity to enter the Woods in large numbers and establish permanent settlements. It is commonly believed that the gnomes were descendants of those that settled the Green Groves of Sal-T'Alimar, perhaps those more dedicated to magic than to active trade with others. What is known is that there are at least three very large Groves that have taken more active interests in the happenings of the Wood. Known to outsiders as Green Glade, Hidden Haven, and Pristine Springs, these Groves are united with the others under the Guuptaud.

The Guuptaud is the semi-secret ruling body of the Groves. For whatever reason, the gnomes have allowed outsiders to refer to the Guuptaud as the "Sly Sinister Superiors," a name that has done little to support the fact that the body is composed of very powerful gnomes. The Guuptaud is composed of illusionists of skill surpassed only by those gnomes in the Desolate South; it also is supported by warriors and rogues who patrol the Woods on the body's behalf. Precisely what the Guuptaud's goals are is not known; it is widely assumed that they are interested in the safety and security of their people and that all other factors are secondary at best. The individual Groves are ruled by a Grove King. It is not known if the Grove Kings are members of the Guuptaud or subordinate to the group. Beyond these two entities, nothing else is known of Grove society. It is widely assumed that the gnomes know more about the secrets of Worm's Wood than even the most studied scholar.

Silent Grove gnomes are said to surreptitiously help those of goodly bend in need if they come across them, but seem to have no interest in revealing themselves. Of the people of Worm's Wood, the only ones that have any direct interaction with the gnomes are the elves and even they have not been invited to the Groves in groups. Among sapiens, the gnomes are very particular. They despise the families that control Eselix, Jaegertooth, Shearspine, and Wormshaven, and are

neutral with those that rule Aldrake, Blackscale, Nevergreen, and Overgold. Only the rulers of Broadbend and Wyrms Vale receive conciliatory reaction from the gnomes.

The gnomes of the Silent Groves are more slender and somewhat shorter than their counterparts in the Eternal Forest.

### ***Eselix (sapiens)***

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Sites: The Cavern of Eyes, Chariel's Snarl, Den of Darshito, The Drake Caves, Grim Lake, Sordens' Keep, The Weeping Fens of Uruba, Wormbile Lake*

*Coat of Arms: A glimmering, silver dragon on a black field*

Formerly the capital of the Kingdom of Eselix, the city of Eselix is the most advanced society in Worm's Wood. Contested by the various nobles of the Wood, the ruler of Eselix remains the single most powerful individual in the area, wielding power over the drakes that find their dens in the caves under the city. It is said that soon the drakes will fly once again as the rulers of Eselix reclaim what the *Claimed Lands Wars* cost them.

Eselix used to be the heart of the long forgotten Glimmerhovel. The city of Glimmerhovel was founded in 970 AG by the King of Bainland as the center of his power to exercise his control through the Noon Alliance over Worm's Wood. To facilitate his rule, the Bainland's king appointed a Lord of Worms from the nobility of Worm's Wood. Although the control of the Kingdom of Bainland was shattered in the midst of the *Bloody Revolt*, Glimmerhovel's prominence in Worm's Wood grew. By *The Darkhold*, Glimmerhovel influenced if not outright controlled most of Worm's Wood. This authority was put to good use when *The Darkhold* engulfed the Woods and the nobles of Glimmerhovel did all they could to the Woods. These efforts were regarded as heroic by the people of the Wood and the Lord of Worms at the time, Esel Aspenhand, became the most revered of all Glimmerhovel's rulers. When he died in 102 AE, having taken unwanted legitimate control of Worm's Wood, Glimmerhovel was renamed the Kingdom of Eselix. With the two *Claimed Land Wars* in the past 50 years, the Kingdom of Eselix was shattered and now Eselix stands as the greatest of the sapien cities in the Woods and is still led by a Lord of Worms. Technically, the Lord of Worms is supposed to be a direct descendant of

Esel Aspenhand; however, since Aspenhand's death, the various noble families of Worm's Wood have done all they can to draw lines to Esel. There are nine of these so-called Royal Houses and all have compiled enough support from lesser nobles and the people to support any claim to the Crown of Worms. Although the Redspines currently hold the Crown of Worms, their power is contested by the Aspenoses, Bluebarks, Brokenclaws, Cloudseers, Highmans, Stonethumbs, Thunderfoots, and Twinswords. While these families control the so-called Worm's Tooth Towns and the other cities in the Woods, they all know that true power in Worm's Wood lies in Eselix. The machinations of the various Royal Houses across Worm's Wood influences and is influenced by Eselix. Beyond the Houses, there are no established traditions in Eselix, not even religion.

There are many gods worshipped in Eselix. No one appears to have dominion over the city; however, some gods do stand out more than others. Aurlarist, Celzar, Dauth Alman, Ganlarid, Nemaria, and Ostensis are extremely popular. It is widely assumed that all of the Royal Houses are strongly associated with one god over others, strengthening their alliances or animosities. Aurlarist comes the closest to have broad appeal since her church focuses on three aspects (benign, malign, and amoral) of Nature, something most can appreciate. Her druids are scattered across Worm's Wood, but are known to have no little power in Eselix. Ganlarid and Ostensis have seen dramatic rises in interest, so they may eventually come to dominate Eselix. The Dragon Queen Tiamat has also experienced a recent surge in interest, likely due to dragon sightings in the past decade. Beyond these gods and cosmic entities, there are plenty of nature spirits in Eselix as well as those that honor the elven and gnomish gods.

Eselix is well known for its drake-forged items. Indeed, this has made Esel nobles extremely rich. Timber is also a popular sale. There is a strong symbiotic relationship between Eselix and the rest of Worm's Wood, so much so that Eselix imports very little from elsewhere. A powerful thieves' guild, the Raiders of Worm's Wood, plays a role not only in illicit activities, but in legitimate trade. While Eselix is not the Raider's base, Eselix is considered a safe haven for the thieves since they aggressively target caravans traveling from Valdeze and Quasii. This does little to improve the abysmal relationship between Eselix and the Ministry.

Esels hate the Ministry, but particularly those

from Quasii and Valdeze. It is not uncommon for violence to erupt in the less sophisticated areas of Eselix if Valds or Quasites are near. While Esels are the most educated group in Worm's Wood, they are still very rustic and superstitious when compared to even Bainlanders. They cling strongly to ancient remedies, behaviors, and ideas to avoid offending the spirits that they believe haunt the Woods. Esels have somewhat quaint attitudes regarding other races. Elves are viewed with cautious respect for they are thought to steal young men and women for their forest dens, never to be seen again. Likewise are gnomes dealt with carefully as they will sneak into houses to cause minor mischief. Hobgoblins and chirpto are half-fiends, bred from the Depths Below and the duruban were pure fiends. Only dwarves are viewed with any degree of normality, and even then are not trusted around gold or silver.

Esels are of average height with pale skin and dark hair and eyes. They dress in very simple, utilitarian attire and are almost always armed.

#### ***The Worm's Tooth Towns (sapiens)***

*Capital: N/A*

*The Towns: Aldrake, Blackscale, Broadbend, Nevergreen, Overgold, Shearspine, Wormshaven, Wyrms Vale*

*Important Locations: The Bloody Heart, Chariel's Snarl, Choralis' Lair, Field of Scales, Flayed Hills, Pool of Blood, Ridgeback's Pass*

Although there are plenty of small hamlets and towns with ties to the cities of Worm's Wood, there are eight towns that have long maintained independence, even during the Kingdom of Eselix. Known as the Worm's Tooth Towns, many of the towns have histories extended back centuries if not more.

The Worm's Tooth Towns are those few settlements that managed, for any number of reasons, to prosper in Worm's Wood without buckling under the wills of city lords or the encroachment of the Ministry. Some of the towns have long been the homes of the greatest Royal Houses, while others are relatively new additions with up and coming nobles or new Royal Houses at their head. All towns have at least two hamlets as protectorates and all are more closely tied to Eselix than they are to Carthron, Jaeggertooth, or Wyrmswood economically and politically. Each has a similar, feudal form of government although there are intricacies that set them apart.

Each town is strongly identified with a specific deity. Aldrake and Nevergreen have historically been tied to Tiamat or Dauth Alman (the truth is unclear), Blackscale and Overgold to Aurlarist, Broadbend to Celzar, Shearspine and Wormshaven to Ostensis, and Wyrms Vale to Nemaria. These associations have also defined the alliances between the various towns and Royal Houses; the towns of Wyrms Vale and Broadbend have historically been allied while the Aldrake and Nevergreen often find common cause. The exception lies with Shearspine and Wormshaven, which exemplify Ostensi value in infighting.

The towns are largely self-contained economically, although all travel to the annual spring fair in Eselix to trade. The town lords take advantage of limited trade along the rivers and most towns have arrangements with the Raiders of Worm's Wood, elves, and gnomes.

By and large, the townsfolk are very reserved, if not downright rude, towards outsiders, particularly those from other towns. This is especially the case for the towns deeper in the Woods. They tend to view non-sapiens with fear, loathing, or awe... often times all three. They are an extremely superstitious lot and believe strongly in ignoring the plights of others. Even the more beneficent towns of Broadbend and Wyrms Vale can be somewhat distant.

Townsfolk look much like Esels, but are more rugged.

**Carthron (sapien)**

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Locations: Cloudkeeper Court, Den of Hemloth, Hearth of Summer*

Lying along the boarder of Worm's Wood and Valdeze, Carthron is a symbol of Ministry aggression against the sovereignty of the Wood. Once a prosperous, if small city, Carthron is now plagued by the aftermath of the second *Claimed Lands War* and likely will be the location where a third *Claimed Lands War* would erupt.

Carthron was founded in 52 CA when the Cloudseer family violently broke away from the Brokenclaws and formed their own Royal House. Having joined forces with worshippers of the gods Ganlarid and Nemaria, the Cloudseers were able to maintain their independence from their former masters and prospered due to the proximity of the Hearth of Summer, the center of Ganlarid worship

in Worm's Wood. The Cloudseers and their allies settled the land that would become Carthron, naming it after a deceased ancestor and slowly forged a number of hamlets near the fledgling city. By 80 CA, the Cloudseers split again along religious lines, those that worshipped Nemaria retreating back into the Woods to Wyrms Vale and those that worshipped Ganlarid remaining in Carthron, their names changed to Cloudkeeper. Strong alliances between Carthron, the elves, and heavy dependence upon the Aspenose rulers of the Kingdom of Eselix prompted Carthron to defend Worm's Wood against Ministry claims. The Kingdom of Eselix would fall during the first *Claimed Lands War* of 147 CA. The land upon which Carthron sat was claimed by Valdeze in the second *Claimed Lands War*, becoming a protectorate of the Silver Country. Ever since, although a Highlord of the line of Valernus rules from Cloudkeeper Court, the Cloudkeepers and their Ganlarite allies have fought covertly and ruthlessly against Valdeze and the Ministry.

Carthron was ruled by the Cloudkeeper family in a traditional, if light-handed feudal system with a number of hamlets and small towns answering to the decree of the Lord of Cloudkeeper Court. The Cloudkeepers had been the masters of Carthron since its inception until the arrival of the Ministry and Valdeze. Now, the Highlord of Carthron rules the city and surrounding lands. Although the people pay grudging obeisance to the Highlord, most truly honor the deposed and hiding Cloudkeepers. This struggle has severely increased Ministerial presence in Carthron, making it a very tense location.

The Ministry is the nominal religion of Carthron; however, in reality Ganlarid and Nemaria are the two most prominent gods worshipped in Carthron as well as a more traditional form of Celzarian worship. This religious tension strongly parallels the political. The Ministry requires temple attendance and severely punishes any that would blaspheme against Ministry doctrine; some have even been burned at the stake for infidelity or heresy. Still, so long as the location of the Hearth of Summer remains unknown to the Ministry, it is probable that Ganlarid worship and influence of the clerics of Ganlarid will remain a firm obstacle to true Ministry dominion.

Carthron boasts rich farming soil. Much of Valdeze's best high tobacco, cotton, and other cash crops actually come from Carthron. In the past, Carthron used to pay extortion money to the Raiders of Worm's Wood; now, the Raiders of

Worm's Wood actively sabotage Ministry efforts in Carthron while suspected Raiders are executed after swift trials.

Carthors are an angry lot that believe that a new, glorious day is approaching when Valdeze and the Ministry are cast out of Carthron. Carthors detest Valds and all Ministry lands. Historically and to this day, Carthors have excellent relations with the B'Ain elves and with gnomes. Among their brethren in Worm's Wood, Carthors get along well only with their relations in Wyrms Vale and with Broadbend. They have little good to say about most of the other Royal Houses, and nothing good to say about the Brokenclaws or Daggerclaws of Wormshaven and Shearspine respectively.

Carthors are among the more down-to-earth Wormers. Although superstitious, until the *Claimed Land Wars*, they were not especially distrustful. Carthors appear much like Esels, if less refined.

#### ***Jaeggertooth (sapiens)***

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Locations: Jaegger's Blood Lake, Jaeggercorpse Castle, The Moaning Trees, Southern Hill Giant Settlements*

One of the oldest cities in Worm's Wood, Jaeggertooth is named after the long dead green Named One, Jaeggertooth Redspine. The city is said to actually rest above the subterranean lair of the famed dragon and that much of his treasure still remains hidden in these caves. The truth of this is unclear as the rulers of Jaeggertooth have done much to curtain outsider exploration of their city.

The founding of Jaeggertooth is unclear. If it was the former location of Jaeggertooth Redspine's lair, the city would likely not have been founded until well after the *Dragonhold*, when Jaeggertooth's mate, Chorisalis, perished. There were a few towns within a couple days of the present city during the Age of Darkness, and it is assumed that these towns, faced with hill giant incursions from the south, goblin threats from the north, and cultic activity from the Ostensi may have found cause to pool together. A powerful warlord named Rischro Redspine is credited with building Jaeggercorpse Castle at the heart of present day Jaeggertooth in 12 of the Age of Despair from the "bones" of Jaeggertooth. Rischro swiftly bound the surrounding towns to the castle by of-

fering protection. By 15 ADS, the city of Jaeggertooth was established with the Redspine family as the rulers and one of the greatest powers in Worm's Wood.

The power of the Redspine family long since divided decades ago, the greatest faction departing for other towns and cities. The branch of the family that continues to rule Jaeggertooth are known as the Greenspines. The Greenspines control every aspect of Jaeggertooth and existed somewhat independently from the short-lived Kingdom of Eselix. The few minor noble families faun over their superiors, competing for their favor. For the past two ages, Jaeggertooth has been ruled by a Marquise of Greenspine. Typically, the eldest son becomes the Talon of Greenspine, controlling the guard, offering defense, and maintaining law while the eldest daughter becomes the Maw of Greenspine, overseeing the mercantile and economic interests of the city and surrounding towns. The Greenspines seem to possess such control over Jaeggertooth that even the various religious orders bow to their wishes. Only the druids of Aurlarist seem immune to the Greenspines' demands.

The proximity of the Moaning Trees, the assumed center of Aurlarin worship in Worm's Wood forces the Greenspines to work with the Arch-Druid; historically, the interaction has been cordial. Jaeggertooth also supports the same religions as Eselix, although Tiamat's cult is especially prominent. The people of Jaeggertooth tend to worship all gods in order to curry the most favor, but over the past two centuries have paid more and more the Chromatic Dragon.

Jaeggertooth does have a surplus of gold and has a large minting operation. It is assumed that if the city wished, it could rival Eselix as the center of Worm's Wood. Jaeggertooth also deals heavily in furs, wood-worked products, and trapping. The Raiders of Worm's Wood are known to frequent Jaeggertooth and are granted even greater autonomy here than in Eselix. As a result, Jaeggertooth has a poor relationship with the Ministry, particularly Quasii.

Jaeggertoothers, as the citizens are called, are more superstitious than their Esel cousins; they are simultaneously more greedy and far less prone to travel beyond their lands. While not as fearful of the Woods as the people of the Worm's Tooth Towns, they believe that it is their lot in life to do as they're told, which is essentially work to please their rulers, and little else. Among each other,

Jaeggars are extremely conniving; they are worse with visitors, bullying them when the opportunity arises and, in failing that, become manipulative. Of all the people of Worm's Wood, they hold the most negative views of the elves despite the assumption that some Greenspines possess elven blood. They likewise have careful disdain for gnomes. They are even more hesitant to deal with chirpts and hobgoblins, and hated the duruban. They have no love for the people of the Ministry.

Jaeggars appear much like Esels, except they tend to wear worn finery.

### ***Wyrmwwood (sapien)***

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Locations: Bilestream, Black Drake Keep, Grim Flow, Jaegger's Spine Mountains, Wishbone Path*

The most remote city in Worm's Wood, Wyrmwwood is perhaps the darkest. Wyrmwwood lies in the shadow of Jaegger's Spine Mountains and supposedly hidden paths into the Eastern Vale and possibly the Lands Below. Whatever the truth of this rumor, Wyrmwwood has always been excluded from serious discussions about Worm's Wood, a situation that may soon change.

Wyrmwwood was established as keep by the King of Bainland in 972 of the Age of Despair as an outpost to guard against the drakes and other monsters that emerged from Jaegger's Spine Mountains to terrorize the western areas of Worm's Wood. The few towns that existed at the time quickly fell under the control of the Count of Worms, later called the Count of Wyrm (erroneously pronounced "WEYRM"). Commander of a military outpost, the Count of Wyrm was often trained in both the martial and magical arts, a tradition that continues to this day. At some point during the Age of Glory, it was discovered that a magical pass, eventually called Wishbone Path, existed near the joining of the Bile Stream and Grim Flow. Seeroth the Dark commanded the powers of Wyrmwwood to defend the pass, although it was never explained what to defend against. For centuries since, Wyrmwwood has served this role at the price of remaining removed from the rest of the land.

Wyrmwwood is ruled by the Count of Wyrm. The Count of Wyrm has absolute authority, although there has never been an attempt to make the position hereditary before the early years of the Common Age. Military attitudes have always per-

meated Wyrmwwood society, so the Count historically appointed his or her most able lieutenant. This has caused much strife as previous families have later laid claim to the Count's Spear, the totem of the Count of Wyrm. In the early years of the Common Age, a branch of the Redspine family known as the Blackspines, took control of the city and continue to rule. The situation in Wyrmwwood is very similar to that of Jaeggertooth in many respects.

Religion in Wyrmwwood is limited to elemental deities, particularly Aurlarist, Brumbd, Minarthris, and Stakarth; Ganlarid and Ostensis also receive significant veneration. Tiamat has long maintained a strong underground cult and many suspect that the Blackspines worship the Chromatic Dragon. Worship in Wyrmwwood is more akin to superstitious ritual. The spilling of blood is prominent and it is not unusual for many people to sacrifice their livestock rather than coin to their various churches. Indeed, Ganlarid's is the only religion in Wyrmwwood that deplores such behavior.

Wyrmers trade very little with the people from beyond. Only Blackscale and Jaeggertooth have regular interaction with them. As a result, Wyrmers are insular and suspicious folk that strongly dislike strangers. They are fatalistic and dour, almost morbid. They have no love for non-sapiens, not even elves, and fear gnomes. They rival Esels in their ability to work drake leather, and this is their most popular export. Drakes and dragon-like beings like pseudodragons are popular here and can be bought from some of the wealthier families. Only a few of the Royal Houses in Worm's Wood are affluent enough to afford such a purchase.

Wyrmers are similar in appearance to Jaeggars, although more ill-kept.

### **Agrabathor Jungle**

**The Lands of the Ma'el Kith Ken (A strange race of half-elves)**

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Locations: Agra Gura Mountains, Agrababala, Blackest Heart, Ravagers' Reap, Marsh of Many Fears*

The Lands of the Ma'el Kith Ken are a collection settlements populated by savage humanoid creatures. Unforgiving to those that trespass their lands, the Ma'el Kith Ken are among the least

understood people in the Lands Under the Crown.

It is unknown how long the Ma'el Kith Ken have lived in the Agrabathor Jungle. Indeed, even the term "ma'el kith ken" seems to have no origin or meaning that outsiders can discern even after the few opportunities to discuss the name and other matters with members of the race. It is believed that the Ma'el Kith Ken have lived in the Jungle since the early days of the Golden Age. The fact that they seem to be a race of half-elves has led some to suggest that they are the descendants of the earliest Yahillians that had taken drow to bed and were eventually banished from Yahilli. Their violence and aggression does fall in line with drow culture, although that may well be a coincidence. Somehow, they survived the dangers not only of the Jungle but the power of the Uruban Empire that had dominated the western reaches of the Jungle and eventually flourished. The only time the Ma'el Kith Ken have ever had a significant role to play in the greater history of the Lands Under the Crown was during *The Darkhold* when a few tribes worked for the black Named One, Hal-lucimain the Deceiver.

If there are any established governments or traditions among the Ma'el Kith Ken, they are inscrutable to outsiders. While it is safe to assume that there is at least one spokesperson for each tribe and perhaps at least one shaman or adept, there are no other guarantees. No one knows how many tribes exist in Agrabathor or to what degrees the tribes interact. Most suspect that while the tribes recognize kinship with each other, they are independent from one another and rivalries, if not outright hatred, exists between some.

The Ma'el Kith Ken seem to have no one religious standard. In the past, it is known that they were partial to Ostensis, Terranolyn, and other gods of dark woods. It is known that at least some have worshipped dragons, ravagers, and other aulspawn.

The Ma'el Kith Ken do not trade with others. Indeed, they will attempt kill almost anyone that trespasses on their land, including Ma'el Kith Ken of other tribes. The only people given free passage are Those Who Walk the Path from Yahilli. This violent intent seems to have no rationale scholars can determine.

Tall and slender, Ma'el Kith Ken look like half-elves with rich brown skin and dark hair. Their eyes vaguely resemble those of great cats and they often decorate their bodies with dyes and

painful looking piercings. The only language they speak is a variation of Draconic and Elven.

## **The Golden Plains**

### ***Yahilli (sapiens)***

*The Golden Savannah*

*Capital: Shining Rock*

*Important Locations: Agrababala, The Excavation Site, Laughing Valley, The Wynding River*

The sprawling savannah of the Golden Plains is home to one of the oldest civilizations Under the Crown, Yahilli. Tribes of related sapiens that have mastered a oneness with the natural world, Yahilli has undergone numerous changes over the course of a 13,000 year history.

No one knows when the ancestors of the Yahillians entered the Golden Plains. During the Ages of Mist and Humen, the Agrabathor Jungle descended further south and it was herein that many sapiens fled to escape dwarven and elven domination. The Yahillians were among the first and they settled the southern areas of the Jungle and the Golden Plains and established dynasties long forgotten. From Yahilli the earliest Vhendimmothians descended, including Fortens the Founder. By the Age of Greatness and the *Excavation of Agrabathor*, Yahilli was a major ally to the Vhendimmothian Empire and foe to the Uruban Empire. However, Yahilli's history was strongly tied to Vhendimmoth's success and when Vhendimmoth was destroyed, Yahilli swiftly deteriorated. By the Age of Despair, Yahilli had established a society that is similar to that of modern times. However, Yahillians still remember the years that their ancestors strode with the great heroes of Vhendimmoth and rode dragons. Recently, the Ministry, seeking to expand its dominion into the Golden Plains and find the Hidden Temple of Celzar, took control of Yahilli during the *Harvest of the Golden Plains* in 128 CA. As a Ministry-state, Yahilli's culture risks being subsumed, a threat that has galvanized the historically warring Tribes.

Yahilli is a collection of 12 to 20 different Tribes, each further divided into Clans and then Families. Each Tribe has its own traditions, system of government, and norms although all share a common heritage, dialect (strongly related to that of Vhendimmoth), and culture. The Tribes are ruled by a Regnant, a man or woman who can trace his heritage back to Fortens the Founder. The Regnants are often selected in a hereditary



fashion; occasionally, they are selected by votes, influence, or personal combat. The Regnants depend heavily upon the Clan Elders and other appointees from the Mothers of Ausarii and the Prides of Vhanther. Regnants typically control the Tribe for life and each sits on the Opaad. The Opaad is the Meeting, the manner in which all the Tribes establish treaties, universal laws, or deal with concerns that affect all of Yahilli. The Opaad appoints Those That Walk, or the Walkers. These are usually men that are trained in the ways of the spear and the savannah who are stripped of their Clan identification in order to defend Yahilli as a whole not only from the Nature that they are taught to interact with, but from outsiders.

Despite Ministry rule, Yahilli still clings to its traditional religion that recognizes spirits of the Golden Plains and a number of Aldra. Chief among the Aldra are Vhanther (their name for Vhanthermis) and Ausarii; other important gods include Ostensis and the Demon Prince of Gnolls, Yasheripith. Those who have made an effort to reconcile their beliefs with the Ministry have found similarities between Vhanther and Celzar's Face of Justice represented by Vhanthermis. However, Ausarii worship and the recognition of other gods is very much frowned upon by the Ministry. For the time being, the Ministry has been slow to impose religious reforms on Yahilli due to the effort in tracking down the various offenders across such wide swaths of land.

Yahilli is home to resources not found elsewhere Under the Crown. Fruits like melons and unique spices are chief trade items. The pelts of lions, leopards, and other creatures bring substantial wealth. Works of art and pottery are also lucrative, particularly with the other lands of the Golden Plains. Yahilli, in turn, has benefited somewhat from the Ministry with the reintroduction of reading and writing.

Yahillians are a very proud people and many hate the Ministry, especially older Yahillians. This hate is not as severe in the southern and eastern reaches, but no matter where a Ministry official travels, his reception will not be pleasant. To date, Yahillians have done little to overthrow Ministry occupation, largely because the Ministry has been relatively slow to impose its values; however, Yahillians do recognize that their resources are being stolen for profit they will never see. Conversely, there are plenty of younger Yahillians and those willing to enrich themselves by taking advantage of the situation. These Yahillians are corrupt in a manner surpassing that of any of their

forebears. Despite this, Yahillians seem wise and noble; while those of the Wynding River may see them as "savages," they are extremely sophisticated in their own way and far closer to Vhendimmothian culture than even the Union of the New Empire. Yahillians get along well with the Union of the New Empire, but see them as foolish in attempting to resurrect that which is dead. They have historically viewed the people of Evelyn's Keep as allies, although they now question this as the Keepers did not come to their aid when the Ministry took over. Yahillians hate gnolls which have historically plagued them and are not fond of chirpto and disliked duruban. Dwarves, elves, and hobgoblins are viewed with suspicion, but never treated poorly unless such treatment is deemed earned. Kin are regarded with amusement, but watched very carefully; gnomes are unknown to them.

Yahillians are relatively tall, the average height being about 6'5". They are also very slender, the average man weighing 180 pounds compared to a woman's 155 pounds. They have dark brown to almost black skin, dark eyes, full lips, and black hair; men grow their hair long and braided while women usually shave their heads, often going bald. Body piercings are popular, as are strategic tattoos, particularly those mimicking big cat or large herbivore patterns. They tend to wear simple, leather or rough linen tunics and sandals.

### ***Evelyn's Keep (elves and sapiens)***

*The City of Gold*

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Locations: The Central, Crawling Darkness, Evelyn's Keep, The Great Dome, Haven of Hope, Hills of Heaven, Lost Library, Old Keep, The Soft Wall, Twinkling Palace, The Wharf*

One of the oldest cities in the Golden Plains, Evelyn's Keep is also one of the wealthiest and certainly the most prominent. Evelyn's Keep is home to many legends including the Crawling Darkness, the Hills of Heaven, and the name sake of the city, Evelyn's Keep. With the threat of the Ministry looming from the north and predations from Mordrain's Keep to the south, Evelyn's Keep may soon enter an era of challenge that will define its future.

It is commonly accepted that Evelyn's Keep was founded in 378 of the Silver Age in order to defend Vhendimmoth's northern borders. The empire, still reeling from the effects of the Golden

*Plains War*, did not maintain effective control over the Keep and within 50 years, the city was effectively independent. It became the center of Celzarian worship outside of Mandl when the Seekers of Righteousness were led to Evelyn's Keep by a manifestation of Celzar where the enchanted sword, Edifier, was found and eventually used to end the *Demon Wars* in the Age of Darkness. The greatest temple of Celzar, Heaven's Acropolis, was erected on the Hills of Heaven in the Age of Despair, becoming one of the few safe havens during the troubled seventh Age; it also became the secret resting place of the Sphere of the Mind in the Age of Glory. Celzarian worship dominated and defined Evelyn's Keep until *The Darkhold* when the Acropolis was destroyed by Zyxrxzy the Ebon Rage and the Sphere of the Mind was taken. Over half of the male population was cursed or killed and women came to dominate the Keep. By the beginning of the Age of Enlightenment, the current system of culture took root with Ausarii worship dominating the Keep. Furthermore, the building of the Lost Library by the Ausarites has made the city the largest intellectual center south of Valdeze. Celzarians across Drm still regard the Keep as a sacred place, and the Ministry believes that the land upon which the Acropolis once stood rightfully belongs in their hands rather than those of infidels. For the past century, the Ministry and Evelyn's Keep have been in talks to work out arrangements on the Hills of Heaven, but nothing has been determined. Tensions have started to rise.

There are plenty of competing factions in Evelyn's Keep, although it would be inappropriate to say that there is violence among them. For as long as can be remembered, Evelyn's Keep has been ruled by a Seneschal. Like the Imperial Seneschals of the Union of the New Empire, the Seneschal of Evelyn's Keep can trace his lineage back to the ancient Vhendimmoth, although in this case he is always of the line of Evelyn the Grey's family. The Seneschal may appoint any male relative to assume the title upon his death. In the past, the Seneschal's rule was all but absolute, but after the *Razing of Heaven*, matriarchs of the various noble families rose into prominence. Today, the Matriarchs serve as the official advisors to the Seneschal and form the Council of Matrons. The Seneschal also must contend with Proveners. Relatively conservative, Proveners are guilds that claim to defend the traditions of Vhendimmoth and work to ensure that the Seneschal's decrees fall in line with Vhendimmothian customs. Since the Age of Glory, the Proveners

and the Matriarchs have challenged each other's influence in the Keep; while there are many more Matriarchs, the Proveners often control the wealth of the common people and maintain the Sentry, the army of Evelyn's Keep. The Seers of Mystery and the Blessed of Celzar are the two greatest religious entities in the Keep and none ignore their positions.

There are many religions in Evelyn's Keep, but Ausarii and Celzar are the greatest. Composed entirely by women, the Seers of Mystery are all worshippers of Ausarii although they are not all priests. The Seers are strongly allied with the Council of Matrons and many of the most prominent Seers are the sisters, daughters, or mothers of Matriarchs. The Seers manage the Lost Library and are consulted by all factions of the Keep's leadership. Conversely, the Blessed of Celzar live in the Havens of Hope near the Hill of Heaven. Historically, they have kept out of political matters, but they do have significant influence over a substantial number of Keepers. Although nowhere near as populous as either the Seers or the Blessed, the wastelords of Khamund are in the Keep; they usually limit their activities to sneaking to the abandoned Creeping Darkness. Cultists of Tiamat, particularly the Dracon, have been a growing threat. Finally, Thore Mire has seen a spike in interest, particularly the Rays of the Shining that offer a more liberal take on Thore Mirian worship.

Fabrics, dyes, textiles, and grains are the dominate trade items of Evelyn's Keep. The Keep trades with Mycrona's Aerie more than any other country or nation and has established trade treaties with the Union of the New Empire, Yahilli, and Bagwin. They have been slow to entertain offers to ship to the Desolate South through Evelyn's Port and have continue ignore Ministry overtures to establish official trade relations with the north. There are plenty of strong costers and guilds not associated with the Proveners; there are also a number of large thieves' guilds in the city, many of them having their origins in Mordrain's Keep.

Keeper culture is an expressive one. Keepers seem highly emotional, sexually open, and ready to fight when threatened. They strongly believe that the world is a place to explore and a fair number spend time in other nearby lands. The Word is highly valued and most Keepers worship one patron god while venerating most of the others. As Keeper culture is so expressive and generally flexible (even the Proveners are flexible relative to the Ministry), they resist constraints. They get along well with elves and kin. Quite a few elves and

plenty of kin live in the Keep and some become integral parts of society. There are a fair number of chirpto as well, although they rarely remain the heat of the Plains for long. Dwarves and hobgoblins, when encountered, are regarded in poor light and duruban were detested. Keepers are familiar with gnomes and it is possible that there are some living in the city, perhaps among the Blessed and the Seers. Keepers regard the people of Mycrona's Aerie with obvious awe and interact frequently with Bagwiners; they deplore what has happened in Yahilli and regard the Union of the New Empire with a mixture of envy and bemusement. Generally speaking, they dislike Evelyn's Port, have been at war with Mordrain's Keep over the years, and resist the efforts of the Ministry; the Blessed of Celzar in particular detest the Ministry.

Keepers favor flowing, colorful garments heavily laden with jewelry. Both men and women wear plenty of make-up and both like to veil at least a portion of their faces. Although of average height, they move with a feline grace and are usually slender. They have light to medium brown complexions, full lips, and usually dark, curly hair that both genders favor long but tightly bound. Eye colors range from sandy yellows and greens to deep browns.

### ***Bagwin (sapiens)***

*The City of Crin*

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Locations: Chronomeer's Tower, Crin's Home, The Deepening, The Highlands, The Lowlands, Mirror of the Soul, Portside, Sycolthor's Wrath*

Best known for being the birthplace and final resting place of Crin the Sacred, Bagwin has the purest connection to the Vhendimmothian Empire in Drm north of the Desolate South. Once a major harbor and outpost for the Last Empire, Bagwin is said to contain many ancient relics of the past as yet unrevealed.

Bagwin was founded during Age of Greatness, although a precise date has never been determined. Legends insist that the original trading outpost was named after an Imperial Sentinel who directly served the Emperor and oversaw the location's completion. Bagwin was a safe harbor between Vhendimmoth, Yahilli, and other sapient towns and cities against the threats of Agrabathor Jungles, Mordrain's Keep, and the Uruban Empire.

As the Empire grew and the threats of the Golden Plain and Agrabathor Jungle were eliminated, the trade outpost became the furthest Vhendimmothian city northeast of the Empire and a military juggernaut that ensured that even the independent cities of the Golden Plains fell in line. However, not even Bagwin escaped the Fall of Forten's Keep unscathed for in 982 ADR, Sycolthor the Grand, in a desperate attempt to complete his *ascension* spell, devastated  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the city. Only the dilapidated Lowlands and Crin's Home survived. Over the Age of Despair, Bagwin slowly rebuilt until, by the Age of Glory, it had assumed a prominent place in the Golden Plains when Seeroth the Dark delivered the Sphere of Time to the city in order to seek out artifacts from the past. Thus, the city became a target of the Forbidden Orders during *The Darkhold*. Although the Sphere was stolen by Byhoril the Dreaded in 1990 AoG, Bagwin survived the war relatively intact. Although Bagwin has avoided becoming embroiled in any intrigue with its neighbors, it continues to attract those seeking access to ancient knowledge and wisdom.

Bagwin is ruled by the High Sentinels. All High Sentinels can trace their heritage back to an Imperial Sentinel that once lived in Bagwin, although those with the greatest influence can trace their lineage back to a Vhendimmothian emperor, or better yet, Crin the Sacred. Most High Sentinels are familiar with The Word, although most are by no means as gifted as wizards in the north; indeed, many prefer martial expertise to The Word. The High Sentinels determine the laws of Bagwin and execute them in the appointment of the Imperials, the army and guard of the city. The noble families from which the High Sentinels are drawn control most of Bagwin's economy. Although Bagwin does have a middle class, most members work for the noble families to one degree or another. There are plenty of powerful wizards and clerics in Bagwin, though, and their desires influence the High Sentinels' actions.

Thore Mire is Bagwin's chief Aldra and the Sons and Daughters of Order are the largest Thore Mirian faction in the city. Other Thore Mirians include the orthodox Thrones and the liberal Rays of the Shining. Unlike the insular High Sentinels, the various Thore Mirian factions actively promote their version of their goddess throughout the Golden Plains. Association with one of the factions will resonate throughout aspects of one's life, sometimes at the most inopportune moments. Other prominent religions include Celzar, Nemaria, and plenty of regional gods associated

with ancient Vhendimmoth. Khamund is believed to have a number of cults, mostly composed of fools and charlatans, and Tiamat – especially the Dracon – has grown in popularity. Indeed, it is believed that at least one High Sentinel is a Dracon convert.

Bagwin continues to be a prominent trade destination for those hoping to ship to Evelyn's Port and the Desolate South. Bagwin is also a place of artifacts from a lost time and many of the wealthy are known to make arrangements with merchants to find wares in Bagwin. From items as simple as pottery and jewelry to embroidery, linens, and rocks from the Vhythalimos Sea, Bagwin is a self-sufficient and wealthy country. Bagwin often finds itself filled with so-called adventurers looking for Sycolthor's Wrath or the Deepening; so long as these types do not cause trouble and make purchases, they are welcome. Unfortunately, there are plenty of thieves' guilds in Bagwin and the Merchants of Kharsis have a small, but growing, presence.

Bagwiners are much like Keepers, although more reserved and withdrawn. They seek little interaction with the outside world, but will welcome strangers. They are not as superstitious or mystery driven as their northern counterparts, but recognize the interest others will have in the past with which they're associated. Bagwiners view Keepers kindly, Airens with barely restrained awe, and frown upon Mordrans. They deal with Porters because they must. Aside from Porters, Bagwiners are the people Under the Crown most familiar with the Desolate South, but seem immune to the wonders of Tetholas. Bagwiners are cool towards non-humans, particularly elves and chirpto. They hated duruban and but have no animosity towards dwarves. They know little of hobgoblins. Their experience with northern cultures is limited, but they have heard little good about the Ministry and treat folks from such lands with friendly caution.

Bagwiners look much like Keepers, although they prefer bright earth tones, do not wear their hair long, and fancy open toed footwear. They are also somewhat sturdier in appearance.

### ***Mycrona's Aerie (sapiens)***

*"The Cloud Cities"*

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Locations: Cloud's Path, Hall of the Spirits, House of the Center, Mount Aerie, Mount Solitude, Stakarth's Rise, Storm Dance, Vhendimmoth's Haven, T'Ur Maul's Way*

Mycrona's Aerie is one of the most beautiful locations Under the Crown; it is also one of the greatest mysteries. Only recently have the people of the Aerie developed ties to their neighbors in the Golden Plain and have yet to interact consistently with those further north or south. As a result, Mycrona's Aerie is a living legend and a place that those seeking knowledge search for, often in vain.

No one knows when Mycrona's Aerie was forged. Although the Aerie takes the name of one of the best known Imperial Sentinels of Vhendimmothian history, Airens make it clear that their lands above the clouds were in place before Mycrona herself set foot in the floating cities. Some scholars believe that the Aerie was created by the legendary saldrash when they ruled Midlorr and that it was discovered by Mycrona late in the Silver Age. Whether the Aerie was inhabited or not when she arrived is unknown, but Mycrona is said to have never returned from the Aerie. The people of the Aerie have yet to share how they came to be and if Mycrona is still alive. What is known is that the Aerie began to communicate with Evelyn's Keep in 388. Since, the Aerie has slowly invited few to explore their floating streets and homes; however, there are many traveling the Storm Dance Mountains searching for alternative means to enter the Cloud Cities.

The Aerie's system of government is unknown to the rest of Drm, although there has been talk of an Illuminated One. Apparently, this Illuminated One is the Aerie's guiding force. Most assume that the Illuminated One is Mycrona the Bright, although no one is certain as Airens have never described the person or referred to position or title as female or male. It is clear that there is some form of government for only those given authority to leave the Aerie are ever seen on Drm; indeed, the same individuals have been encountered repeatedly ever few years and seem to speak on behalf of the Cloud Cities.

Airens seem to worship a small medley of gods, particularly Nemaria, Lanira, Stakarth, and other sky related good or neutral deities. Oddly, Celzar is not among those worshipped in the Aerie or at least none encountered have professed as much. If there are evil gods in the Aerie, they are not spoken of by those who have been encountered.

Airens exhibit an odd degree of frivolous reser-

vation. On the one hand, they usually seem extremely interested in the cultures, lives, and interests of others and are easily distracted; simultaneously, they are very succinct when discussing their own home and society, and can be very stern if pressed. To date, the only people that Airens have developed an understanding with are the people of Evelyn's Keep; in particular, they seem to have forged relationships with the Seers of Mystery. They enjoy elven company but find dwarves too pushy and nosey. Chirpto have not interacted with Airens to any significant degree for even they cannot find their hidden city.

Airens are genuinely beautiful sapiens. They are universally tall with lustrous, light brown skin and full, yet silken hair that runs the gamut of color. They move with a grace rivaling that of the elves and prefer clothing that resembles that of the clouds among which they live.

***Mordrain's Keep (sapiens)***

*Capital:* N/A

*Important Locations:* *Five Spire Tower, Land of Scales, Mordrain's Keep, Tasler's Reach*

The oldest city in the Golden Plains, Mordrain's Keep is the darkest place in the area. A haven for the unscrupulous, it is a place with deep roots into the past and a brooding hostility towards those that value the past during which Vhendimmoth controlled the southern reaches of Drm.

According to Elven Bard's Tales, Mordrain's Keep was founded early in the Age of Humen by the same branch of people that would form Vhendimmoth. However, unlike their cousins, the original Mordrans were the servants of the dragons that controlled the Agrabathor Jungle and Golden Plains. The leader of these cultists was a man (usually portrayed as a half-elf) named Mordrain who not only worshipped dragons but had learned to assume their form. When one of his draconic mistresses, Vhendimmoth, was killed by Fortens the Founder, he and others woke Tasler the Radiant, thereby instigating the *War of Wyrms*. Although the dragons lost and largely retreated from the Lands Under the Crown, Mordrain's Keep persevered as a haven for those that continued to worship them. During the Age of Greatness, Mordrain's Keep's last prominent ruler, Shalantia the Quintessent, sacrificed her life to summon Tiamat the Queen of Dragons to Drm in the *Righteous Wars of 1813*. The cosmic dragon was banished back to Hell and a wrathful

Vhendimmoth razed Mordrain's Keep. For millennia, Mordrain's Keep was a desolate place where only young dragons and hardy mortals lived. After the *Dragonhold*, Mordrain's Keep became a place sacred to those that worshipped dragons or else believed that Vhendimmoth deserved to fall for its hubris. By the beginning of *The Darkhold*, Mordrain's Keep was reestablished as a series of small towns that are believed to have assisted the Forbidden Orders' activities in the south. Over the past 750 years, Mordrain's Keep has grown into a large, if rather dilapidated, city and major trading center.

Mordrain's Keep is ruled by Five Families, noble houses that claim either a connection to Mordrain, Shalantia, or in rare cases, a dragon. The Five Families do not directly control the city as they are often too busy contesting with each other to have direct impact on the people. Only those that live on the various Family estates have to be concerned with noble interests or threats. Each Family has its own guard; there is not a unified guard for Mordrain's Keep as a whole. In addition to the Five Families, there are a number of prominent trading costers; really little more than thieves' guilds, these costers are a bane to the rest of the Golden Plains and have grown in prominence in Mordrain's Keep, occasionally influencing the interests of one Family over another.

Although there is no city-sanctioned religion in Mordrain's Keep, plenty Mordrans are known to worship Aldra like Dauth Alman, Bythal Dalax, Thore Mire, and Iycarthis. However, the Dracon cult is more prominent here than anywhere else in Drm. It is probable that at least two, if not all of the Five Families are associated with the cult. There are other, lesser known draconic religions in Mordrain's Keep, although most of these are limited to young, bored nobles not important enough to warrant Dracon interest.

Mordrain's Keep is a way-station of sorts for the Union of the New Order and the Golden Plains. It also sees a fair amount of visitation from folk as far north as Bainland. Mordrain's Keep's location affords it a number of mineral and metal deposits; Mordrain's Keep also smelts ores, giving it some of the best metal worked items in the Golden Plains, even rivaling Bainland. Finally, the Five Families control a number of diamond mines. Mordrain's Keep could rival Evelyn's Keep economically if its people practiced better monetary management.

Mordrans, as the people of Mordrain's Keep

are called, are grim people. Although very precise, they are cynical and cold; they always expect the worse of people and are threatened by those that seem to open and outgoing. Much of this has to do with their heritage, which is that of hardy folk that settled in a dangerous location. They strongly dislike all other people of the Golden Plains except Porters; they especially loath Keeper. Mordrans that encounter Worm's Wooders find something of kindred, if coarse, spirits; they are view the Ministry as fools, particularly Quasites. The people of the Union of the New Order are perceived as imbeciles but Mordrans are too greedy to shirk trading opportunities.

Mordrans are closer in appearance to people of the New Order than their Golden Plains allies. They are often heavily built people that favor intimidating, if utilitarian, clothing.

### ***Evelyn's Port (sapiens)***

*"Land of the End"*

*Capital: Vhythalimos Point*

*Important Locations: Archenlight, Broad Hull Mansion, Citadel of Anman, Dark Sky Harbor, The Sea Maze, Ship's Side, Temple of the Seas' Queen, Vhythalimos Sea*

The bustling country Evelyn's Port is the largest civilization in the Golden Plains and the only one with ties to the Desolate South. In fact, no lands can challenge Evelyn's Port's near monopoly on exotic items from the Desolate South or the experiences of the people from this great, if incredibly greedy, country.

Evelyn's Port's precise founding is unclear. It is generally believed that the Port lies near the birth place of the Imperial Sentinel, Evelyn the Grey. This would have it filled with people of mixed Mandelite and Vhendimmothian heritage. Most believe that the Port was initially known as Yulinnath and that it was a small farming town or perhaps series of towns. Yulinnath was the site where Evelyn the Grey and her Creeping Darkness was stopped by the Silver Army. As a result, the town was renamed Evelyn's Haven in memory of the once great Imperial Sentinel. When the *Dragonhold* ended, Evelyn's Haven was one of the few large Vhendimmothian town northeast of the newly formed Vhythalimos Sea to survive; it also now had a massive harbor. Over the next few centuries, Evelyn's Haven became the point at which people hoping to learn the fate of other Vhendimmothian lands west of submerged Forten's Keep disembarked. This influx of visitors caused Evelyn's Haven to grow until, by the Age of Glory, it

was a bustling city and renamed Evelyn's Port. More importantly, sometime in the early years of the Age of Glory, several ships that had departed from Evelyn's Port a year earlier returned with news that indeed there were lands beyond the raging waters of the Vhythalimos and even several safe routes. Evelyn's Port became an immensely wealthy city.

Evelyn's Port is ruled by the Grand Sentinel. For most of the years following the *Dragonhold*, the Grand Sentinel was simply a figurehead of a lost time. Ideally descended from among the various families that can claim prominent Imperial Sentinels, the truth is that the Grand Sentinel was often "appointed" by the true rulers of the country, the Shipwrights. Powerful merchant sailors, the Shipwrights were initially independent sailors that created a shipping guild thousands of years ago; now, the descendants of those original sailors control most of the wealth in the nation. Recently this breakdown has changed as the current Grand Sentinel is a powerful wizard, perhaps even an actual Imperial Sentinel. Whatever the case, one of the Grand Sentinels historically important powers was the appointment of the City Sentinels, the governors of the six cities of the Port. Like the Grand Sentinel, these once impotent appointees have far greater power. While the Grand Sentinel and the Shipwrights compete to control Evelyn's Port, both sides agree on the appointment of the Shipmaster, the head of the Portguard. There are rumors that the Grand Sentinel also has his own police force. With the intrigue between the Grand Sentinel and the Shipwrights escalating, one of the few stable power centers lies with the various churches of Evelyn's Port.

Evelyn's Port harbors a wide array of gods. Among the most prominent are Ausarii, Churabus, Iycarthis, Khamund, Minarthris, and Thore Mire. Iycarthis and Minarthris in particular receive plenty of veneration, although quite a few sailors pray to Ausarii and Churabus to protect them from the darkness and mysteries of the deep. Thore Mire has great power, although it is usually reserved among the Shipwrights and the families of the Grand Sentinel. The Throne sect is especially powerful. There are plenty of cults associated with sea creatures, including a few dedicated to aboleths, kraken, and even the Prince of Demons, Demogorgon.

Evelyn's Port trades in almost everything. Virtually any and every exotic item from the Desolate South can be found in the Port. Unlike Ashtur to the far north, Evelyn's Port does not actively en-

courage those from other lands to travel into the Desolate South without “guidance” from a native Porter, thereby ensuring that at least a portion of the wealth remains in the Port. The Port is a haven for thieves’ guilds, the greatest being the Wharfmongers. Although they have not sought to expand into the rest of the Golden Plains, the Wharfmongers have several bases in the safer reaches of the Vhythalimos and have been known to attack small ships, stealing the bounty, and selling the passengers as slaves to those in the Desolate South if they don’t kill them.

Porters are extremely self-centered people who are certain of their right to whatever wealth comes their way. As long as someone is not killed (and even some find the means to justify death), Porters do not believe that anything is “unethical” in business. As a result, they are regarded as scoundrels and cheats to the rest of the Golden Plain. Porters believe that their cousins across the Plain are fools; the only ones they do not perceive as fools are the Mordrans and they think of them as dangerous. Porters have no position on any race, regarding each as an individual who can either pay or not pay. Too jaded to react with awe to much of anything, Porters regard the people of the Desolate South and Mycrona’s Aerie as enterprises in the making.

Porters look much like Bagwiners, although somewhat slimmer. They wear eclectic attire, favoring styles that stun the senses. Thus, their clothes not only look odd, but often appear painful to wear and often harbor extreme (and sometimes unpleasant) odors.

### **The Eternal Forest**

#### ***The Lands of L’Istona (chirpto, elves, sapiens)***

*“Land of Fallen Leaves”*

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Sites: Bonebark Glen, Canopy of Corpses, Grove of Dust, Lake of Endless Deaths, The Moog, Realm of Seeing Trees*

Stretching from the Chain of Burquebain to the northeastern reaches of the Eternal Forest, the Lands of L’Istona constitute the largest number of chirpto, elven, and sapien petty kingdoms and independent towns in Drm. Indeed, the very idea of a united L’Istona is considered a farce by many scholars since there has not even anyone individual coming close to being a king or queen of the area in hundreds of years.

The L’Istona were another family of elves that traveled from the Desolate South into the Lands Under the Crown later in the Age of Greatness. Composed of what most sapiens refer to as dark elves, wild Elves, and wood Elves, this Family was an isolated group that did not take sides during the *Family Wars*. They settled in heavily forested land of the Eternal Forest and at the base of the Chain of Burquebain where small chirpto and sapien hamlets already existed. Since that time, different rulers and despots have come and gone, some uniting the vying races, others seeking the dominance of one race over another. While they have battled each other, the different races that populate L’Istona also contest with the Kingdoms of Z’Ythral. By the Age of Glory, the populace – elven and non-elven alike – became known as the people of L’Istona.

As there are almost 100 different hamlets and towns in the L’Istona, there is no one leader. At times, however, some individuals become powerful enough to create small fiefs. These lords control the trade between the Kingdoms of Sal T’Alimar and the Tribes of Elians; some have actually become enterprising enough to take advantage of trade with the Kingdom of Bainland and the nations of Ashtur and Mandl. A variety of products come out of the Land of L’Istona, including excellent coal, tree sap, expensive furs, and water said to contain medicinal powers.

The Lands of L’Istona are replete with a staggering array of religions. The likes of Aurlarist, Brumbd, Churarbus, Ganlarid, Havas, Helias, Marlon, Minarthris, Ostensis, and Stakarh are worshipped primarily among the chirpto and sapiens while the Children of the Glade are worshipped by the elves.

It is nearly impossible to offer many descriptions about the people of L’Istona besides “independent.” These people resist constraints and intrusive order. They defend their territories viciously and take offense easily to outsiders. As a whole, they detest dwarves and view the various “civilized” lands across the Deep Sea as foolish and weak. They have no quarrel with the elves, gnomes, and half-elves of Sal T’Alimar, The Great Grove, the Tribes of Elians, and Undersar, but prefer to limit their interaction with these people. However, L’Istonans despise the Kingdoms of Z’Ythral and kill drow on sight.

#### ***The Kingdoms of Z’Ythral (drow)***

*“The Black Forest Kingdom”*

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Sites: Blood Grove, The Halls of Screaming Blood, Rivers of Bile, The Whispering Trees*

There are few places more mysterious than the portions of the Eternal Forest claimed by the Kingdoms of Z'Ythral, home of the fearful elves known as drow. Spread across the central portions of the Eternal Forest, the Kingdoms of Z'Ythral are almost entirely subterranean; indeed, most of the people of Z'Ythral have never stepped foot on the surface of Drm as they've been trapped beneath the ground for thousands of years. But, on occasion, some do emerge, and swiftly instigate conflict with the Lands of L'Istona and the Kingdoms of Sal-T'Alimar, Undersar, and Tribes of Elians if they are not fighting each other.

It is unknown how long the Kingdoms of Z'Ythral have existed, although Elven Bards songs suggest that some elves may have arrived late in the Age of Greatness. It is also unclear how many drow compromise the Kingdoms' population; some believe that there are only a few thousand, while others believe that there are millions. What is known is that for millennia, the Kingdoms of Z'Ythral have been almost entirely underground in the so-called "Lands Below." Elven Bards sing of some terrible crime these drow committed that resulted in their eternal imprisonment; however, occasionally some drow do escape their prison below the ground where they seek to harm those who dare to travel the surface world over their Kingdoms.

It is unknown how many different kingdoms comprise Z'Ythral. It is known that they all contest each other and worship different gods. Some worship the demon queen known as Lolth, while others worship the Aldra, Ostensis; some seem to have no religious identity at all. The few that have successfully escaped the clutches of the Lands Below haunt the northern Eternal Forest, warring with neighboring lands and effectively ensuring that limited trade exists between the Deep Sea locales and the western portions of the Lands Under the Crown. Most of these drow do not speak to other humen language, even if captured and put to the test, so little is known about specific Z'Ythral attitudes; still, considering their propensity for violence and the possibility that they were imprisoned by other elves, it is safe to say that Z'Ythralan drow hate all other humen, other elves in particular. Those traveling through the surface portions of the Kingdoms of Z'Ythral should always do so in large groups and with cau-

tion.

### ***The Kingdoms of Sal T'Alimar (elves)*** ***"Kingdoms of Eternal Spring"***

***Capital: Talquadai***

***Important Sites: Blessed Peoples' Palace, Forests of Sal-Talquadai, Furrowed Plateau, Gates of Talamas, Heart of Talquad, The Moog, Serene Glade, Shurun-lai, Swoon, Uriyens' Pain***

When most non-elves think of the Eternal Forest, they automatically think of the Kingdoms of Sal T'Alimar. The greatest and largest of the current elven homelands in Drm, the Kingdoms of Sal T'Alimar are a confederacy of scores of small, nomadic "kingdoms" that dominate the southern and central portions of eastern the Eternal Forest. Literally hundreds of different elven kingdoms exist in Sal T'Alimar in almost perpetual isolation from the rest of Drm. Despite this isolation, it has been from Sal T'Alimar and its predecessor, T'Alimar, that many of the continent-realm's most famous elves emerged.

In the distant past, sometime during the later years of the Age of Greatness as the *First Family War* came to a close and both the Empires of D'Alicar and S'Grieyl crumbled, survivors of the struggles traveled north. While the slaves of D'Alicar would forge into the northwestern coast of the Deep Sea, the common elves of dying S'Grieyl settled in the huge, enchanted Eternal Forest. These elves, calling themselves the T'Alimar, quickly populated the southern portions of the Forest. In spite of the existence of some very powerful entities that also lived in the Forest and thousands of goblins, the elves prospered. T'Alimar stretched across almost all of Eternal Forest until the Age of Darkness when the T'Alimar King, Uriyens the Green, was tricked into summoning fiends from the Depth Below, beginning the *Demon Wars*. This act resulted in the destruction of T'Alimar and forced the elves to move further north where they established their new home, Sal T'Alimar.

Sal T'Alimar is dominated by three major trees: the graceful aspenian trees that flow across the least dense parts of the Forest; the derineran trees, the largest trees in Drm that rise at the heart of the Forest; and the magnificent qualdi trees that make up the rest of Zalphan Forest. The elves largely live in the inner-most areas of the Forest, having turned the derineran Trees into homes, shops, and inns. Semi-nomadic, the elves



regularly move in and out of areas that have been established by tradition as settled areas. For three years or so, a few “kingdoms” will live among the trees in one part of the Forest only to move abruptly, but always in time for new arrivals to take up residence. However, there are two places in Sal T’Alimar that never experience these shifts. First is the Heart of Talquad where all the kingdoms call home. Here, the closest thing to a head of government for the entire Sal T’Alimar Family resides, the Al’Rias. Alongside the Al’Rias are the Demesnes, or the traditional “guilds,” that serve the needs of the entire Kingdom. The Demesnes include the Warriors, Wordspeakers, and Worshipers of the Glade. The other constant in Sal-T’Alimar is Shurun-lai, or the “Place of Eternal Light.” It is here that the Queen of Sal T’Alimar (and some say, of all non-evil elves in Drm) rules. It has been over 300 years since a non-elf has seen the Queen of Sal T’Alimar.

Although it is the Queen who holds the hearts of the T’Alimar Elves, the Al’Rias administers the day-to-day functions for the Kingdoms as a whole, including the collection of taxes and addressing problems or concerns that affect all of Sal T’Alimar. Selected from the various “kingdom” elders, the Al’Rias is perhaps the most visible elven figure of importance to non-elves in Drm. Still, the Al’Rias relies on the blessing and approval of the Queen to do his or her job. The Al’Rias also works very closely with the Demesnes Heads; through the travels of the Warriors and the scrying of the Wordspeakers, the Al’Rias is aware of most events in the Kingdoms. However, it is truly the Demesne of Worshipers of the Glade that unifies the Kingdoms.

Talamas is the most important god of Sal T’Alimar, although the worship of Yalarama, the Child of the Trees, is also popular. The various gods of the Children of the Glade are worshipped equally in Sal-T’Alimar, and different vegetable sacrifices and festivals are held in the honor of different gods. However, there have been growing numbers of Sorilam worship, particularly among the southern most “kingdoms;” the sobering influences of Sorilam, the goddess of the diamond tears and grace, is slowly being perceived as a threat to the frivolous liberty Sal T’Alimar has historically enjoyed.

Sal T’Alimar trades heavily with the Lands of L’Istona, the gnomes of the Great Grove, and the Tribes of Elian. Historically, they have traded with the nation of Mandl and the Kingdom of Burquebain, both of which lay east of the Eternal Forest

across the Deep Sea. Despite the distance between the two elven Kingdoms, Sal T’Alimar is aware of the on-goings of the Kingdoms of K’Rystas; they consider the lost Kingdoms of Z’Ythral as hated foes. Sal T’Alimar rarely involves itself with Valdeze or the rest of the Ministry (save Mandl and Bainland) since both *Claimed Land Wars*, and it’s been over 700 years since dwarves or hobgoblins have entered the borders. Sal T’Alimar elves are perceived as extremely pleasant, approachable elves who are very interested in exploring all aspects of life. Although they seem cloistered in their Forests, many of them spend at least 100 years traveling Drm; quite a few have many half-elven children scattered across the continent-realm.

***Tribes of Elians (elves, gnomes, half-elves, and sapiens)***

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Locations: Verdant Springs*

The Tribes of Elian dominates the southeastern portions of the Eternal Forest and are a medley of unassociated elven, gnomish, and sapien towns and hamlets. In many ways, the Tribes of Elians constitute the most diverse, yet simultaneously simple, population in modern Drm. All of the towns and hamlets, of which there are almost 40, are completely independent of each other and any other power in the Eternal Forest. Indeed, most of these towns and hamlets do not consider themselves as part of any “tribe” or group and would scoff at the notion this text takes.

The Tribes of Elians have no real known date of settlement and it is likely that many of the towns and hamlets in that lie within the southeastern portions of the Eternal Forest have existed for only 100 years or so. Many claim to have been part of larger towns and even cities in the distant past before the coming of the elves from the south, and many lie within short distance of ancient, large ruins of unknown background. According to Elven Bards, when the elves arrived in this part of the Eternal Forest, there were large towns and small cities dominated by sapiens; however, these towns and cities were not ruled by sapiens but by any number of powerful entities. Some stories relate that snake-like beings ruled from the Verdant Springs, while others point to Naseus Soulsunder. The legends all agree that something happened that drove the ruler(s) off and that some elves, intrigued with the lives of these sapiens, left their kin to live in the cities. Over time, half-elves came into being, and the

cities, although still vibrant from sapien drive, became smaller and more independent due to elven frivolity. The cities were abandoned and towns and hamlets thrived.

These towns and hamlets have many names and no one location seems more important than another. However, all share a number of similarities. First, all of the towns worship a wide swath of deities. Some following after Talamas and other elven gods, while others worship the Aldra, and still others bow to remote beings like the Virtues of Heaven or the Defenders of Freedom. Second, all of the towns are aggressively anti-unification and interaction. Although not precisely xenophobic, the Elians are not interested in the events that trouble the rest of Drm. As a result, as continent-realm wide calamities have rocked Drm (like the *Demon Wars* or *The Darkhold*), the towns were either ignored or were suddenly decimated and forced to rebuild years later. Third, Elians are even more rustic than the folk of Worm's Wood, living strictly off the land. They know little of technology beyond small wagons, and simple farming tools and techniques. Finally, the Elians are extremely tolerant racially. Half-elves and gnomes are extremely common and constitute about 50% of the total population.

The Tribes of Elians hold varying degrees of attachment to the rest of the Eternal Forest's denizens. Some war with the Sal-T'Alimar for ancient slights, while others trade actively with the elves. Some fight among each other, while others seek peace with their neighbors. In the end, there is no guiding indicator for the Tribes as a whole beyond those listed above.

### ***Undersar***

*Capital: Unknown*

*Important Locations: The Burning Nodes, Pathway to Below*

Very little is known about Undersar. In fact, the only reason it is included in this list is due to increasing reports from various treasure seekers and the adventurous sorts who have delved into the this southern portion of the Deep Sea. According to these reports, the Undersar is a subterranean city of gnomes unlike those seen on the surface of the continent-realm. Most of these reports refer to ruins, monoliths, and edifices located around what has recently become dubbed the Pathway to Below. The ruins and monoliths speak of this Undersar and illustrate what are

clearly gnome-like beings as the location's inhabitants. A slowly growing minority of reports also tell of so-called Burning Nodes which are said to lie hidden within the Pathway to Below. According to the tales of those who have come across these Nodes, which bear striking resemblances to those of the Hall of Nodes near the Great Grove, the entrance into Undersar is found.

If Undersar offers anything of value to Drm, it is unknown. To date, none have claimed to have found the city much less interact with its people. Most gnomes across Drm, even those of the Great Grove, scoff at the notion of such a city, pointing out that gnomes are not city-dwellers and that they do not favor the depths of the earth to such a degree as to live beneath it eternally. However, it is interesting to note that the people of the Great Grove do consider the Pathway to Below as hallowed ground and it is known that gnomes from across Drm travel to Undersar at some point in their long lives.

### ***The Great Grove (gnomes)***

*Capital: N/A*

*Important Sites: Hall of Nodes, Lake Bottomless, Old Man Gnarl, Silent Hill, Steppes of Burquebain*

Lying near the foothills of the Steppes of Burquebain, the Great Grove is the largest gnomish settlement north of the Vhythalimos Sea and possibly the oldest such settlement in Drm. Hidden within the powerful illusions and enchantments, the Great Grove also stands as the only gnomish settlement wherein the populace interacts directly with its neighbors.

The Great Grove is believed to have formed early during the Age of Humen shortly after the Destruction of Satrimmoth. Although the gnomes have never shared much of their racial histories with outsiders, there are a growing number of scholars who believe that many dwarves fleeing the cataclysm that destroyed their Empire were lost in the Steppes of Burquebain. These dwarves eventually met with the relatively small population of elves living in the Eternal Forest at the time; the co-mingling between the two populations resulted in the creation of a new "race" now known as gnomes. The earliest members of the race settled in areas that melded the components of both original races; essentially, the gnomes settled the foothills within the heavily forested western portions of the Eternal Forest. Of course, since the

gnomes have never shared their own history, and since neither dwarves nor elves have confirmed the legitimacy of these proliferating rumors, the true origins of the Great Grove may never be known.

The Great Grove is ruled by the Silent Servants, a cadre of arcanists powerful in the arts of Illusion and Enchantment. The precise number of Servants is unknown since no non-gnome can claim to have seen a single representative, but it is presumed that there are at least 10 such leaders. Alongside the Silent Servants are the various Clan Lords who rule the various family groups that live in the Grove. These Clan Lords are the leaders with whom most non-gnomes are familiar. There are currently 50 Clans in the Grove. Each Clan has varying degrees of internal stratification; however, most Clans have guilds associated with trade, religion, and those who interact with non-gnomes. The Great Grove is possibly best known for the existence of the Grove Watchers. The Grove Watchers patrol the borders of the Great Grove and are not a part of any Clan; they all answer to the Silent Servants. It is interesting to note that the Grove Watchers always have a battalion guarding Silent Hill and the Hall of Nodes.

The Great Grove worships the Watchers in the Woods, the so-called gnomish pantheon of gods. Unfortunately, very little is known about the Watchers in the Woods as gnomes speak very little about their gods to outsiders. In fact, clerics from the Great Grove are rarely encountered beyond the settlement.

Trade between the Great Grove and surrounding areas is vibrant. The gnomes prospect for gold and other precious metals in the many rivers and streams that race from the Steppes. They also sell various, mildly magic wares to those who can afford such purchases. There is heavy trading between the Great Grove, the Tribes of Elians, the Kingdoms of Sal-T'Alimar, and the Lands of L'Is-tona. Aside from those very entrepreneurial gnomes who travel to Mandl or Ashtur, the isolated location of the Grove results in few people beyond the Zalphan Forest aware of its existence.

When compared to gnomes elsewhere, those of the Great Grove are very direct and willing to interact openly with outsiders. The gnomes of the Great Grove also come across as more materialistic than their cousins in Worm's Wood and other locales. They are also more aggressive in defending their territory, attacking intruders instead of seeking to send them astray strictly through

magic. The gnomes of the Great Grove are slightly taller and thinner than their Worm's Wood cousins.

## **Beyond the Lands Under the Crown**

### **The Southern Rim and the Desolate South**

The bulk of the region south of the Vhythalimos Sea is referred to as, quite inaccurately, the Desolate South. To be sure, there are many locations south of the Vhythalimos Sea to which the appellation "desolate" properly apply, but these locations are well over 100 miles from what many have started to call the "Southern Rim."

The Southern Rim is where the last surviving bastions of Vhendimmoth continue to exist before one descends into Bleakwood Forest and the rest of the true Desolate South. The largest, wealthiest, and best-known sapient city in the Southern Rim is Tetholas. Once a major intellectual center for the Vhendimmothian Empire, Tetholas was transformed into a port city after the Fall of Forten's Keep. While many similar cities perished during this time, Tetholas persevered and soon became one of the few havens for those people that fled the cancer-like spread of Bleakwood Forest during the Age of Despair. Tetholas now stands as the chief port and point of contact between the Southern Rim and the Lands Under the Crown.

Tetholas is ruled by the Seneschal's Select, the descendants of the powerful Sentinels of Vhendimmoth; interestingly, most of the Select are not arcane spellcasters, but warriors and travelers who braved the wilderness of the Desolate South as part of the ritual to lead the city. The Select is very involved in the affairs of Tetholas and tend to make decisions based upon the greater good of the population, and the need for order and income. Tetholas is known for its wealth of truly exotic items including butterfly nectar, screamar pelts, elf-hair embroidered clothing, and unusual but flavorful spices. Although there are dozens of independent smaller sapient towns across the Southern Rim, they all look to Tetholas for defense and aid, although two cities, Ghoreless and Mathavas, have become quite important and militant in recent decades.

Besides Tetholas, there are only a few well known civilizations and most of these are only rumors rather than established areas. Chief among these is the Silver Valley. Probably the

largest gnomish settlement, the Silver Valley is also the only city of gnomes known in Drm. The Silver Valley purportedly contains the largest fortress known in the Southern Rim, Sliver Shard, which serves as a keep to fend against the darkness of Bleakwood. Although Tetholas claims the gnomes of the Silver Valley as allies, few Tetholans have seen the Silver Valley, much less a gnome since, like all Gnomish Glades, it is concealed behind extremely powerful magic. Rumors persist that the gnomes are ruled by the Silent Silver Six and that they are the force that holds back whatever haunts Bleakwood Forest.

Besides Tetholas and the Silver Valley, a few elven towns exist on the border of within the Silver Valley. Referred to as the Silver Woods, the elves herein are the descendants of the largely extinct S'Grieyl Family. They are aloof, haughty, and rarely make their presence known to non-elves, although they do sell their hair to Tetholas at exorbitant prices.

What lies beyond the Silver Woods within Bleakwood Forest is unknown. While there are known to be hordes of giants, goblins, and kobolds in the outer reaches of the Forest, called the Bleak Border by some, little else is certain about Bleakwood. The various monstrous beings that live in the Bleak Border have threatened the civilized lands of the Southern Rim for millennia and only the combined efforts of the Sliver Shard and Tetholas seem to keep them at bay. On occasion, they show remarkable organization, leading some to believe that something within the Forest controls these creatures.

Bleakwood Forest itself supposedly contains the remains of long dead empires. Legends persist that so-called drow elves were banished from the surface of Drm in some distant past, while others claim that there is huge city of chirpto called Merthles within the dismal confines of the forest. Still others state that a Named One, a Demon Prince, or some other horror is trapped in the forest and that it needs but to shatter the Sliver Shard in order to cover the Southern Rim in darkness. The truth is unknown, much like the rest of the Desolate South, but there is no doubt that Bleakwood has spread unnaturally fast over the past five Ages.

Aside from Bleakwood Forest, other rumored locations within the Desolate South include the Crimson Peaks, the Dead Coast, Drearglade, Lush Desert, and Mount Satrimmoth, the highest mountain in Drm

## The Eastern Vale

East of the Ash Mountains and the Agrabathor Jungle is the Eastern Vale. A wide stretch of land that borders the Veiled Ocean, the Eastern Vale is seemingly inhospitable for no attempt to settle it have come to fruition.

The Eastern Vale is a relatively flat, dimly lit place. Shadows and figments seem to be the only population of the Eastern Vale to those that have traveled its paths. Indeed, most have failed to travel more than 100 miles into the Vale as they often flee the very feel of the place, which is akin to that of the oldest dragons. Those that have persevered more than 500 miles rarely return and those that do come back with a madness that not even the greatest magic can remove.

It is known that Curoboria had attempted to relocate to the Eastern Vale as a final attempt to escape the infestation of lesser races some 100 years before the *Upheaval*. Some scholars believe that the *Upheaval* may have been caused in part by the duruban infiltration of the Vale.

The Vale is not believed to contain any areas settled by humen and even aulspawn such as dragons avoid traveling it. There are countless theories offered by sages. Some wonder if the Vale is a place cursed by the saldrash before the Ascension; others suggest that it is a path into the Land of Dreams or even the Endless Boundary. Of course, there are those that believe that the other continent-realms may be found if one travels long enough. A more recent theory insists that the Vale ends in nothingness.

## The Froden Norv

While most travelers only consider the Norvan Peninsula to be the Froden Norv, anything north of the Crown of Burquebain is the Froden Norv. It is unclear as to how far north the Froden Norv extends; most scholars accept up to 500 miles north of the Heartless Sea, but there have been adventurers who claim that the Froden Norv extends into nothingness. Whatever the distance, there are a few locations known to exist.

The Norvan Peninsula is the area most familiar to the Lands Under the Crown. Here are numerous barbarian tribes. So far, only sapien and kin tribes have been confirmed, but there are some that believe that there are chirpto and elven barbarians as well. These tribes are not necessarily violent and are immersed in traditions that have

changed little over the past 10,000 years at least. Besides the human tribes of the Norvan Peninsula there are frost giant, gnoll, and ogre settlements, some of which have taken over the smaller humen tribes, using them as slaves and worse. There are plenty of monstrous beings as well, ice trolls being particularly common; winter wolves, ice worms, and even white dragons can be encountered regularly. Indeed, the largest population of true dragons can be found in the peninsula and the Named One, Glacit the Frost Queen, lives in a deep canyon called the Frigid Rift.

Immediately north of the Crown of Burquebain is the Norvan coast and the Thymis Ocean. No one knows the origin of the name, but it is mentioned in the *Cilidian* itself. The banks leading to Thymis are known to the dwarves of Burquebain and regularly patrolled by fire giants of Ugthara. What importance the Thymis Ocean holds for the fire giants is unclear, but it the *Cilidian* claims that the legendary Isle of Knowledge lies some 200 miles off the Norvan coast. Quite a few adventurers have claimed to have traveled to the Isle, gaining amazing information about Drm's past, present, and futures, but few give these tales much credence.

The final location of note in the Froden Norv is Beacon Peak. Of all the locations, the Beacon Peak is the most legendary and the least known for its location and appearance apparently change if the tales of those few adventurers that traveled to it are to be believed. Willow Woods, a glowing forest, surrounds Beacon Peak; this is the only consistent element. Other than the forest and the mountain itself, stories suggest that there may be a tower, a castle, a town, or just a massive gate to the Realms Beyond atop Beacon Peak. Some hold that a lich, a fiend, an angel, or something altogether different guards the Beacon Peak for upon entering the area, one can successfully relocate to another reality, including one of the other continent-realms.

### **The Great Kharsis Desert**

By far the best known of the Lands Beyond the Crown, the Great Kharsis Desert is a vast land of tales, mysteries, and legends that rival those of the Crowned Lands. Populated by those who were once enslaved to the Satrimmothian, S'Grieylian, or D'Alicarn empires, the people of the Great Kharsis Desert are a hardy, incredibly diverse group.

The Great Kharsis Desert is believed to be a

bastardization of the Common tongue. Considered a curse by those that first toiled in the wind and sand, it was called the "great, cursed desert." The settling of the Great Kharsis Desert is told in metaphor by the people that inhabit it, making it difficult to determine time frames, much less truths. It is generally assumed that the earliest and most successful settlements that eventually became towns and cities arose late in the Golden Age of Drm in the northeastern reaches of the desert where there were underground lakes and rivers. The best known locations in the desert are Klm and Nsm; rumors of two more locations, Adl and Rcn have recently reached the Lands Under the Crown.

Klm is thought of as the greatest nation in the Great Kharsis Desert and one of the chief reasons why Ashtur is so wealthy. Also known as the Desert's Oasis, Klm is thought of as a place of awe and magic the likes of which makes the wonderment of Ashtur pale in comparison. It is said that spirits from the Realms Beyond are every day encounters and that the servants of the gods treat directly with mortal worshippers. If these tales are truths or hyperbole is unknown. Klm lies some 300 miles from the western Chain of Burquebain in a valley called Aurlarist's Bosom; the Bosom is fed by the numerous subterranean lakes, the largest known by names like Honey of the Desert or the Milk of Life. Whatever the name, this and other underground bodies of water are the reason for Klm's successes as it is one of the few places in the desert that can sustain itself. The Desert's Oasis is populated by all the humen races but dwarves and the extinct duruban and, if the rumors are true, the greatest of these have the blood of creatures from Beyond in their veins. Klm is ruled by the Potentate of the Sands, an apparently hereditary line of rulers that can trace themselves back to the earliest settlers of Klm. The Potentate's power is vast and he is often said to be the child of spirits known as genies. Besides the Potentate of the Sands, other important groups include the churches of Cabernasus and Pyaras; although these two deities are well known in the Lands Under the Crown, their power in Klm is unmatched by other gods. There are also numerous merchant guilds and secret orders, including the Merchants of Kharsis.

Nsm, Adl, and Rcn are three great nations that lie well beyond Klm. Nsm is said to be a dark place. Nsm is referred to by Klmities as the Kingdom of Sands for it lies on the border of the Sea of Ash, the deepest part of the desert, and has severely limited access to water. Nsm is popu-

lated mostly by sapiens, although a fair number of hobgoblins live here as well. It is said to be a place of warlike people who live under an odd code that measures a person's worth by the lives he has consumed. As such, Nsm is regarded as a place to avoid for not only are the people apparently murderously cannibalistic, they are said to be ruled by vampires and similar mortal-consuming creatures. Still, Klm trades heavily with Nsm and, while Klmities scoff at the tales of a nation of vampires, they have done nothing to clarify the truth.

Rcn may be the eldest of the nations. Even more remote and less known than Nsm, much of what is known of Rcn is based upon Klmite tales, for even Klm limits its dealings with Rcn. Rcn is supposedly a place in which powerful warriors rule, having trained their bodies and minds to overcome the hostile environment of the land. These rulers, called the Dynasts by Klm, are so distant from their servants as to be like gods. Adl is relatively new to both Klm and the Lands Under the Crown. According to the few that have encountered it, Adl is controlled by the Wizards of the Crystal, arcanists with power to rival that of the Ash or the Savants. Many Klmities believe that the Adl are from one of the other continent-realms and have recently found the means to breach the *Pact of Dominance* that keeps them separated.

If there are distinct groups of humen, like elven kingdoms or gnome glades, no one has found them as of yet. Numerous creatures unknown to the Lands Under the Crown can be found here like purple worms, falcons of light, sand vortices. Blue dragons rule some of the larger towns and smaller cities, and other aulspawn have occasionally risen up from the sands to wreak havoc. Rivers of sand, living storms, and great celestial lights are known to exist in the Deep Desert beyond the Sea of Ash.

The Great Kharsis Desert stretches south to the borders of the Desolate South and it may well interact with aspects of the South. Adventurers from Klm say that the Desert languishes at least 1000 miles to the west, eventually reaching a huge drop known as the Canyon of the Lost Name. Beyond this Canyon is the Unknowable West.

### The Unknowable West

Like the Eastern Vale, the Unknowable West is a great mystery to the Lands Under the Crown and even the people of the Great Kharsis Desert. Lying beyond the Canyon of the Lost Name, the Un-

knowable West is a place where it is said that the aulspawn still rule and that the gods can walk unhindered. Tales of a forest so great as to make the Eternal Forest seem like a backyard garden are coupled with suggestions of a sea so wide and so deep that it touches the Element of Water. Whatever lies in the Unknowable West, the *Cillidian* insists that it will be learned during the Reckoning.

## Secret Societies of Drm

The silence in the room was thick with tension as Dentun continued to glare at them. Mortex suddenly felt small under that gaze. Small and stupid. It wasn't a feeling he liked and he was about to tell the duke as much when Volstaff spoke.

"Be that as it may," the group's cleric said as diplomatically as he could, "we have learned much in our travels and have grown from our experiences."

"Some of us have, anyway," Korg sniffed.

Volstaff ignored the dwarf and pressed on. "And we hope to learn more after this meeting with you. I wonder, though, if you could enlighten us as to the people we were competing with in procuring the book."

Dentun's affability abruptly returned. "Yes. A very interesting description you included in your letter to me, Ibenez. You wrote that these men had yellowish complexions... That they carried oddly curved swords and that they turned to sand when they were killed."

The librarian continued after Ibenez nodded, "Sounds like you were dealing with Merchants of Kharsis." Noting the confused or blank expressions, he added, "They are a very organized group of thieves whose origins are in the Great Kharsis Desert. They have not been around long as far as my research has shown, appearing in the Lands Under the Crown over the past 600 years or so and

*Below are five of the numerous secret societies in Drm. While some of these groups are dedicated to enriching themselves, others are rabid cultists, and still others seem to have no obvious goal in their activities. In most cases, encountering these groups almost guarantees that an adventure is far more than a mundane treasure hunt or monster-slaying enterprise and that the truth may well threaten an entire town if not a whole nation.*

possibly didn't emerge from the desert until roughly 700 years ago."

Marta threw up her hands in disgust. "What is it with everything starting up 700 years ago? *The Darkhold* started more problems than it fixed!"

"There are more than just these Merchants in Dm to worry about," Dentun persisted. "The Dracon. The Hidden Hand. The Seekers. I suspect that even the Ministry is a secret order. There are so many groups out there seeking more than just wealth and power."

### The Dracon

One of the oldest secret societies in Dm, the Dracon is the largest and most dedicated group of dragon worshipers in the continent-realm. With its origins tied to the earliest days of Vhendimmoth, the Dracon were the mortal servants of the dragons that laired in the Agrabathor Jungles and the reaches of the Golden Plains before the rise of Vhendimmoth. Indeed, their origins may even stretch as far north as Worm's Wood where one Named One, Jaeggertooth Redspine, ruled. Initially vying factions that did the bidding of their draconic masters – which often meant they were fighting against the servants of other dragons – the Dracon was united for the first time early in the Age of Humen by legendary figure known as Mordrain.

There are many conflicting stories about Mordrain. Some claim he was a great warrior who was the greatest servant of the dragon rulers of the jungle. Others believe he was a powerful wizard who controlled dragons rather than serve them. Others say he was truly a dragon or else had discovered the means to become such a creature. Whatever the truth, Mordrain was dedicated to ensuring draconic power throughout the Golden Plains and Agrabathor. When one of the greatest dragons, the nigh cosmic creature known as Vhendimmoth, was killed by the great king of sapiens, Fortens the Founder, Mordrain is said to have received a calling from the depths of Perdition. He was given the secrets to awaken the greatest dragon of Dm, and possibly of Midlorr, Tasler the Radiant, the Dragon King. Mordrain gathered to him the greatest servants of the dragons and the Dracon was united for the first time. The forbidden magic necessary to awaken Tasler killed Mordrain and his fellow summoners, but the location of the act became the foundation of

Mordrain's Keep. Although Tasler the Radiant was defeated, the *War of Wyrms* would not be the only time Vhendimmoth was threatened by the Dracon. One Age later, the heir to Mordrain's desires, Shalantia the Quintessent, rose to prominence. Hoping to make the Dracon religion the only religion, she selected Vhendimmoth as the starting point for her goal. After years of battling Vhendimmoth, Shalantia succeeded in the unthinkable: she summoned Tiamat the Chromatic Dragon to the mortal coil of Dm. The Queen of Dragons devastated much of Fortens' Keep, a precursor of what would happen thousands of years later during the *Dragonhold*. It took the combined efforts of the great paladin Lan Carlsonian and the wizard Mammun the Maker to banish Tiamat back into the Nine Hells.

Since Tiamat was banished, the Dracon slowly descended into obscurity to the greater world. However, they still exist, a group of fanatic cultists whose sole desire is to ensure not just the rule of dragons over all humenity, but to bring Tiamat into the mortal coil where she can rule permanently. As such, not only does the Dracon traffic with dragons, they are also tied to fiends, particularly devils. It is not appropriate to call the Dracon insane; rather, they are empty of any individuality or self-perception. They are consumed with a need to serve something greater than themselves, something they can see, feel, and smell. They are atheists of the highest order, viewing gods as little more than fools' dreams; those that would serve gods are blasphemers and those that are devoured by their dragon masters should be honored to sustain so great a being.

The Dracon cult is opposed to all other draconic cults, particularly churches of Tiamat. The Dracon deplore the suggestion that Tiamat is a god and believe that those that view her in that fashion are grotesque heretics. Other dragon cults are hated because they are a threat to the already weak power base the Dracon struggles to maintain. The Dracon only worship chromatic dragons; all other draconic species are considered lesser, imperfect mutations of Tiamat's design. Although a Dracon will not attempt to kill metallic dragons for spite and may actually fight against those intending to do such a thing, they will not hesitate to kill one if threatened. Dracon activities typically include searching out and taking care of dragon eggs as they are seeking to restore the dragon population to where it was prior to the *Dragonhold*. They hunt down and kill dragonslayers and seek out Named Ones in order to learn new things or else be consumed in the perfect

furnace that is a dragon's stomach. Indeed, the best way to die is to be incinerated by a dragon's breath weapon. The only thing greater than death by draconic breath weapon is the ability to assume draconic form. The Dragon's hierarchy and membership requirements are unknown, but most suspect that they are headquartered near, if not in, Mordrain's Keep.

### The Hidden Hand

Adventurers across the Lands Under the Crown often encounter great luck or terrible misfortune during their travels. Some feel as if there is a greater destiny leading them down a predetermined path, even when they strive to go their own course. Although for many this is simply a matter of perception, the greatest adventurers who compared notes and experiences have come to believe that there is a force manipulating their actions, a force that may well be manipulating the nations of Drm. A few even claim to have encountered the servants of this force whose insignia is a clawed, grasping hand over a standing body. This is the Hidden Hand and no one knows that they want.

Whether a powerful organization, a cabal of likeminded individuals with connections to the highest levels of Drm politics, or one being with power enormous enough to influence thousands, the Hidden Hand frightens those that have learned of its existence. Of course, there are just as many that scoff at the existence of a continent-realm-wide organization with enough power to move the world in a manner of its interests, whatever those might be. After all, if they were so good, why have an insignia much less allow themselves to be discovered? Those that believe counter that the Hidden Hand wants a few to know of its existence, that their successes and failures are part of whatever design the Hand orchestrates.

Whatever the Hidden Hand is, it rarely involves itself with lowly travelers and treasure hunters, instead preferring to ensnare or hinder powerful, resourceful groups. Still, some believe that the Hand has taken interest in neophytes when the fancy struck and that they are pulling the strings of other secret societies. To date, the truth of the Hidden Hand remains as clear as the darkness of a moonless night.

### The Merchants of Kharsis

Perhaps the largest and most resourceful

thieves' guild in the continent-realm, the Merchants of Kharsis are an incredibly organized conglomerate of assassins, blackmailers, extortionists, and thieves. Although their origins are in the Great Kharsis Desert, they have interests in the Eternal Forest, the depths of the Deep Sea, and rippling flow of the Wynding River, and the savannahs of the Golden Plains. It is said that no one can ignore a deal offered by the Merchants; those that do often beg for death long before it happens.

The Merchants of Kharsis were not known to Drm until shortly after *The Darkhold*. They first appeared in Klm, although the original members' identities are unknown. Most believe that some of the most experienced thieves and assassins in the Desert's Oasis decided to pool their resources to take advantage of renewed trade between Klm and Ashtur. Over time, this original goal expanded into an attempt to reap not just from the flow of coin between the Gilded Path, but across all of the Lands Under the Crown. The Merchants can be found everywhere; while in some cities, their presence is inconsequential, in others even the greatest guildsmen pay extortion money to the Merchants. As they continue to spread across the Lands Under the Crown, the Merchants have either subsumed other thieves' guilds or are at war with them. Some believe that it is only a matter of time before the Merchants control thieving activities across Drm.

The Merchants of Kharsis are known for a number of features. First, all members seem required to have true thieving talent; thus a wizard that is truly a Merchant of Kharsis has training in pick pocketing or the knows how to use of a light weapon to deal a terrible blow, while a wizard that simply *works for* the Merchants will not have such training. Second, the Merchants of Kharsis follow an honor system, always making sure that those they target are aware of their presence days in advance by leaving a small pile of sand in a prominent location; likewise, the Merchants never commit a crime without indicating their involvement after the fact. Finally, the Merchants seem virtually indestructible. When killed, a Merchant of Kharsis' body dissolves into sand in seconds; the same Merchant will often be seen again by his "killer" seeking revenge.

The leadership of the Merchants of Kharsis is a mystery, although it is known that there are different kinds of paths one can take in the group. To date, the best known Merchants of Kharsis are the contractors and the dusters. Contractors ar-



range business dealings between the Merchants and others for services or payments; dusters are assassins, hired through the contractors or by a third party to kill; they are also used by the Merchants to punish those that have crossed the organization. As the Merchants grow in power, it is likely that more will be learned about their structure. All Merchants of Kharsis may be identified with the tattoo of a desert vulture holding a large coin in both talons.

### The Ministry

The largest, best known theocracy in Drm, the Ministry is also one of the largest and most organized secret societies Under the Crown. Founded in 382 of the Age of Enlightenment by the enigmatic Founders, the internal workings of the Ministry, like the identities of the Founders, remain unknown.

According to the teachings of the Ministry, the three Founders, all priest of Celzar, were met with powerful dreams of their Lord battling Dauth Alman and his diabolical servants. At the peak of this battle, Celzar called the “gods” Alleris, Lanira, Nemaria, Pyaras, Thore Mire, and Vhanthermis to aid him in the final assault against evil. The forces of Dauth Alman were vanquished and returned to their abode in the Nine Hells. The Founders, in awe with the visions they experienced met in Quasii with one priest of each of the “gods” that aided their lord and determined that if Celzar had the power and right to command other “gods” they must not be gods, but simply powerful beings subservient to Celzar. The priest of the other “gods” that joined Celzar admitted that this indeed did appear to be the case and that a new ministry had to come about. The Founders, joined by these accepting servants of Celzar’s allies, began to spread this new ministry through all of Quasii. The Celzarian priests, already men of significant power, had little trouble sharing their insights to the nobility of Quasii as well as to other less powerful Celzarian priests. Within a month, the Thore Mirian church, which dominated Quasii, accepted the new Ministry and abdicated its main temple, the magnificent Glass Tower, to the Founders. Within the following century, whether through diplomacy or war, the Ministry grew to include Bainland, Carthron, Mandl, Quasii, Sambs, Valdeze, and Yahilli as well as numerous independent villages, towns, and city-states.

The cosmology of the Ministry supports the idea that Celzar is the one, supreme god. He is

represented in three faces: Celzar the King, Vhanthermis the Judge, and Faeynas the Purifier. Four Archangels act as powerful servants in Celzar’s pursuit of goodness. The four Archangels are Lanira, Nemaria, Pyaras, and Thore Mire. Celzar’s evil brother, Dauth Alman, the Dark Sovereign and Lord of Damnation, opposes Celzar and his Archangels at every turn. Any spirit not associated with Celzar is allied to the Dark Sovereign. The history of the world is told in the *Holy Writ*. Written in a language only taught to the Ministers, few know exactly what it communicates, but it is the holy book of the Ministry.

The Ministry has a tremendous amount of power in Drm. Although the states and cities associated with the Ministry are sovereign, they still must consider the will and doctrines of the Ministry. The strongest weapon the Ministry wields over its member nations is the ability to accuse one of blasphemy. The significance of this accusation is such that Kings of Bainland and Dothans of Quasii have been dethroned. The Ministry requires that member nations pay annual tithes. Additionally, all businesses pay 7% of their monthly income to their locale Ministry should they hope to do business across the Ministry. So far as protection, the military branch of the Ministry, the Riders of Justice, defends any and all blatant assaults against the Ministry and its member-states.

There are three distinct lines in the Ministry: the ministers, the Angelic Orders, and the Riders of Justice. There is another “line” known as the viziers, although this branch is usually included with the Ministers. Unlike many other religions across Drm, most Ministry officials cannot call on the power of Celzar or the Archangels. Those with this access, known as the sainted (or blessed among the Angelic Orders) are considered to have been touched by Celzar himself but do not seem to rise any faster within the ranks of the Ministry. All the lines of the Ministry ultimately answer to the Ond, the head of the Ministry.

While the ministers are the visible leaders and true power of the Ministry, the Angelic Orders work to help the common people adhere to aspects of Ministry doctrine. The Riders of Justice defend the Ministry as a whole and are encamped in the different lands in the Ministry. Known as the hidden line of the Ministry, the viziers are the agents of the Ministry. Viziers travel across the Ministry lands, often in the guise of “normal” ministers looking out for signs of blasphemy, The Word, or anything else considered improper within the doctrine of the Ministry.

The Circle of Grand Ministers meets every three months in the Chamber of Grand Ministers in the Glass Towers of Quasii. The nature of what is discussed in these meetings is unknown for none may enter these discussions save the Ond, the Supreme Preceptor of the Riders of Justice, and the Holy Shadow of Redemption (the leader of the viziers). Second to the Ond in power, the Grand Ministers are among the most powerful men in the Ministry. It is from among the Circle of Grand Ministers that future Onds are selected.

The supreme leader of the Ministry and one of the most powerful men in Drm is the Ond. "Ond" is a derivative of the Dwarven word "ounds" meaning "supreme." The Ond is the supreme representative of Celzar on Drm. Thus, his authority supersedes that of all other beings (including the four Archangels), whether or not they believe in Celzar. As Celzar's supreme representative, the actions and words of the Ond are infallible and not to be questioned. He is the ultimate and final arbiter on all Ministerial doctrines and he has the sole power to declare anything, be it states, individuals, or thoughts, blasphemous.

The following are the best known Ministry doctrines:

- There is one God and Celzar is His name. All other "gods" are either servants of Celzar or servants of Dauth Alman, the Dark Sovereign of Hell.
- Men's rulership over women is divine will. As Celzar is a man and rules over the archangels, so too does the male rule over the female.
- The Word is blasphemous. The Word is the work of Dauth Alman. Those that seek to learn the secrets of The Word or those cursed with it in their veins are clearly marked by the Dark Sovereign and are damned without the aid of the Ministry. Those accused of witchcraft may be burnt at the stake.
- Elves are the children of the Dark. Elves are innately evil creatures. Their immortality, carnality, drive to anarchy, and propensity to lie and mislead are reflective of their evil nature. Although those that fear the Gauntlet of Holiness should not seek to kill them, they should not be trafficked with nor trusted. Other races to beware are hobgoblins, chirpto, and kin.

- The Ond is infallible: The will of the Ond is the will of Celzar, the Gauntlet of Holiness. Pleasing the Ond is one with pleasing the King of Kings.

### The Seekers

There are countless people that make it a point to travel the continent-realm of Drm. Some seek wealth, others seek challenge, and still others seek notoriety or power. However, there are a few that seek something far greater: they seek knowledge and insight not just into the past but into the future. They seek knowledge of *The Godspell* and things surrounding it. From this central concern, all other motivations follow. From this central concern do the Seekers rise.

Named in part based upon the Seekers of Righteousness who freed Drm from the *Demon Wars*, the Seekers of the modern era are not just a few brave souls traveling the continent-realm, but a confederacy of scores of adventurers. No one knows how many Seekers exist, much less all of their identities. The Seekers are not all on one accord or even completely aware of or familiar with the identities of their peers; it's probably safe to say that most of them are unfamiliar with each other. However, they all share a dedication to uncovering the secrets that are the foundation not just of Drm, but of Midlorr as a whole.

Of all secret societies, the Seekers are the least likely to view themselves in such a light. Although they share a common goal based upon a general premise, it is a broad goal that allows a great deal of flexibility. They seem to have no limitation in terms of their membership or overall power. All races have those who are interested in uncovering the truth, and all nations have those willing to risk much in such an endeavor. The Seekers first appeared late in the Age of Enlightenment, at least those who identified themselves as such. Few have been evil, with most dedicated to goodness of some sort or another. While nature of *The Godspell* drives all of them, each Seeker group has its own means to achieving their cosmic ends. Some become involved in the politics of an area while others delve into the bowels of Midlorr, seeking portals into the Lands Below, the other continent-realms, or other Realities altogether.

The few Seekers that have identified themselves claim to have a patron. Although most have refused to identify this patron, some indicate that it is none other than Seeroth the Dark, the

Last Emperor of Vhendimmoth. While none but the Seekers can claim to have seen him, no one can say whether he is dead or not; after all, Seeroth is immortal. The precise relationship between the Seekers and Seeroth – if he exists at all – is unknown. No one knows if he seeks out potential recruits or if they stumble into him; no one knows if the various groups believe they work for him or not. No one knows if Seeroth is manipulating them as history suggests he had a propensity to do to his allies.

In the end, the Seekers are a mystery because no one knows how one is created or even if their patron exists at all. Many of the greatest adventurers (like the Gathered Pact) may well have been Seekers and that many more rising stars, like the Cleansing Fist or the Wandering Seven, may be associated with the group.

### **A Brief History of Drm**

Daerian, who had said very little throughout the meeting, raised her hand to speak. When Dentun acknowledged her, she said, “It seems like there’s so much out there. And yet, this book... Well, what does it have to do with everything?”

For the first time, the duke seemed genuinely startled. “It has everything to do with everything we’ve talked about today!”

Daerian shook her head. “No. I mean... We came to see the secrets in the book. All we see now is more about the world. We want to see the book for what it is, though. You haven’t given us this.”

Dentun smirked. Somehow, it was a meaner face than when he accused them of being ignorant. “I believe that you have learned all that can be learned about the *Cilidian* today. I think that in some ways you have learned too much without

*The Cilidian recounts the Dawn Before the Dawn and some third and later source Cilidians even tell of the Age of Mist and the Age of Humen. The stories of Drm are essential in understanding the here-and-now of the setting. What follows is a truncated history of Drm that highlights some of the most important events of the past 17,000 and more years.*

earning it.”

Daerian’s face flushed in anger. “You know nothing! We almost died getting that damned thing!”

Dentun continued oblivious to her. “This world has so many stories. So many tales. And all of them are tied to this book and the secrets it harbors. He raised the book and looked it over fondly. “The *Cilidian* is a gift. It is a map into the truth of Midlorr. Of *The Godspell* that makes Midlorr. And, like any map or book, it is worthless unless you understand the language.” His smirk hardened as he looked at each of the Fist in turn. “And you are, for all intents and purposes, illiterate.”

### **Dawn Before the Dawn**

The Dawn Before the Dawn, or antiquity, consists of the days before any recorded history. Largely based upon the legends told in the *Cilidian* and by the Elven Bards, the precise times of these events, much less their actuality, is unknown. Most scholars believe that the Dawn Before the Dawn lasted for at least 10,000 years, although others suggest that the events of antiquity could have taken place over hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of years.

**The Others:** Midlorr is a world hidden in darkness and chaos. On Midlorr is a secret, a source of all that is buried in darkness and ignorance. It is *The Godspell* and it caused the last Nothingness of the Cosmos. Others emerge from the Nothingness of the Cosmos, bringing awareness and light. They feel a call. It is *The Godspell* and the Others fear it. They know that they must find the means to protect the Cosmos from *The Godspell* without taking a direct hand for they have been charged with a task from Beyond the Beyond.

**The Others Act:** The Others restructure the Beyond as the Cosmos organizes itself. Of their member, one is charged with ensuring that *The Godspell* never leaves Midlorr. This one is Aul.

**The Saldra Awaken:** Aul creates the Saldra, guardian spirits of Midlorr, to defend against the predations of cosmic entities that seek *The Godspell*. However, the Saldra are overcome with lust for *The Godspell*, creating animosity and division.

**The Clash of Spirits:** The Saldra go to war with each other as well as with interloper immortals from the Realms Beyond. Thousands are destroyed, their powers consumed by the victors.

**The Pact of Dominance:** Whether by Aul's imposition or their own initiative, the Saldra agree to a *Pact of Dominance* that limits their connection to Midlorr and the extent of magical power in the realm of the mortals to be. The *Pact* not only divides the Saldra into three different camps (Aldra, Drala, and Sala), but restricts non-Saldra from interacting with the Midlorr.

**The Aulspawn:** Whether by accident or by intent, Aul's last act is the creation of the aulspawn. Ranging in power from the lowest forms of life to the pinnacle of the non-divine, the aulspawn include dragons, saldrash, and the soulestra.

**The Aulspawn War:** The dragons, the greatest of the aulspawn, swiftly dominate the planet, enslaving their weaker cousins. Independent and selfish, the dragons are unable to contest the united power of the various aulspawn and are overthrown.

**The Saldrash War:** With the dragons defeated, the saldrash divide into camps that have become aware of *The Godspell*. While some, like the zar, seek to destroy all of existence, the saldrash hope to use *The Godspell* to become gods. The saldrash defeat their former allies and create a great empire in Midlorr with Arxth Maximmoth as their capital. In short order, they gather the Seven Spheres.

**The Creation of Humen:** Using the Seven Spheres, the saldrash create the seven humen races on the peak of Arxth Maximmoth.

**The Ascension of the Saldrash and the Diving:** With the power of *The Godspell*, the saldrash ascend into the heavens, leaving their unprotected creations behind. The various aulspawn quickly emerge from their ancient hiding places and attack the young humen races, dividing them across the face of Midlorr.

**Brooding:** Some power, whether from the Saldra, the ascended saldrash, or humen ingenuity, causes the various aulspawn to discontinue their assault against the humen races for a time. It is at this point that any time frame is assigned, typically that of 10,000 years.

**The Dominion of Humen begins:** With the Age of Mist, the 12 Ages of Drm have been dominated by the seven humen races.

#### First Age:

The Age of Mist. 5000 years.

Parallels Earth's Stone Age to First Egyptian Dynasty  
Empires of the time: Satrimmoth (dwarves) and Doblin (hobgoblin)

Sylvan creatures settle in the Pass of Gold.

10: The dwarves settle in the ruins of Arxth Maximmoth and found Satrimmoth.

40: The Satrimmoth Empire is founded as the dwarves take control of the lands across the south.

119: The K'Rystas flee Satrimmoth through magic experimentation.

120: The K'Rystas family of elves arrive in the Pass of Gold; they found Sh'urtur, the Land of Crystal.

4000: The S'Grieyl family of elves violently break free from the Satrimmoth Empire, creating their first cities in the Golden Glade.

4994: The Satrimmoth Empire is destroyed in an extraplanar calamity.

4996: Survivors of the *Satrimmoth Calamity* undertake *The Great Exodus*

#### Second Age:

The Age of Humen. 2000 years

Parallels Earth's Bronze Age. High Egyptian Dynasties and early (Trojan) Greek

Empires of the time: S'Grieyl (elves), Doblin (decline), and Uruba (duruban)

4: Sh'urtur is destroyed by a flight of blue dragons.

20: The dwarves arrive in the Crown of Burquebain

40: The dwarves found the Burning Crown of Cliver.

51: The *War of the Anvil and Hammer* among the dwarves begins.

92: Elven magic in Worm's Wood transforms thousands of hobgoblins into goblins and similar creatures across Drm.

105: The *Wars of the Wynding River* begin. The charismatic duruban chieftain, Grrelld, unites various duruban tribes to contest the land of Wynding River held by the A'Grabath and B'Ain elves, and sapiens.

115: Fortens the Founder establishes a small town named after the great dragon he slew, Vhendimmoth.

117: The dwarven princes, Blunthammer and Sterling Edge, leave Burquebain and quest across Drm.

The Empire of Uruba is founded.

118: The *War of Wyrms* begins as Tasler the Radiant orders his children to decimate sapiens.

120: Randella Maguire leads Fortens to *Dracovomica* in the winter. Fortens is mortally wounded killing Tasler the Radiant. The green Named One, Naseus Soulsunder, takes the *Dracovomica*. Tortens, Fortens' brother, becomes the king of Vhendimmoth.

122: Blunthammer and Sterling Edge return to Burquebain with the Axe of Destiny and Disjuncter, a Sword of Satrimmoth, *The War of the Anvil and Hammer* ends.

123: The first recorded sightings of giants in the north.

126: The *Wars of the Wynding River* end with the Uruban Empire dominating the Wynding River Valley.

664: Parshton is founded.

668: Vashtar is founded.

### Third Age:

The Age of Greatness. 2000 years  
Parallels Earth's Iron Age. Greco/Roman or Classical Period

Empires of the Time: S'Grieyl (decline), Uruba (decline), D'Alicar (drow), and Vhendimmoth (sapient)

451: *War of Black Blood*: The people of Parshton and Vashtar unite with the K'Rytas elves to overcome goblin and fire giant aggression. The War ends a year later.

500: *The Silver Wars*: The S'Grieyl Empire goes to war with Vhendimmoth over border disputes along the Silverwood.

577: *The Silver War* ends: The S'Grieyl Empire and Vhendimmoth come to terms over borders and establish trade agreements.

816: *Deep Sea War I* begins when Golhav attacks and sacks Burashcar and lays siege on Vashtar.

818: *The Chaining of Tasler Mori*: The elder dragon, Tasler Mori, is tricked by the wizard Mammun the Maker into a chain. The bound monster is cast into the Endless Chasm of Burquebain.

*Family War I*: S'Grieyl is torn asunder from within when sinister cultists open a portal to the Depths Below, infecting 1/3 of the population

with vile evil, creating the D'Alicar or drow elves.

819: The *Deep Sea War I* ends due to the involvement of Zalphan the Bard. Vashtar capitulates to Parshton and Ashtur is formed in all but name.

The *Righteous Wars of Vhendimmoth* begin as the thrones of Thore Mire and the Emperor of Vhendimmoth seek to eradicate the worship of other beings in Vhendimmoth. All wars throughout the remainder of the Age of Greatness would be related to these *Righteous Wars*.

839: The Bleakwood is formed: The demonic power of the D'Alicar warps portions of the Golden Glade of S'Grieyl, creating the haunted Bleakwood.

840: *The Sunder of S'Grieyl*: The S'Grieyl split further along family lines as they attempt to forestall the D'Alicar. The A'Grabath, B'Ain, and T'Alimar elves flee the assaults of D'Alicar and scatter across Drm. Portions of Silvrwood become Bleakwood.

844: The T'Alimar Elves claim the Eternal Forest as theirs.

845: The A'Grabath and B'Ain elves settle in Worm's Wood, the Wynding River Valley, and northern portions of the Agrabathor Jungles.

1736: *The Excavation of Yahilli* (part of the *Righteous Wars of Vhendimmoth*): The powers of Agrabathor Jungles threaten the northeastern border of the Vhendimmothian Empire. Many powerful soulestra, including the legendary ravagers, are destroyed or bound while various cults, including those of Ostensis and Terranolyn, are all but annihilated.

1788: *The Wynding River Valley War II* begins (part of the *Righteous Wars of Vhendimmoth*): The Empire of Vhendimmoth goes to war with the Empire of Uruba in a contest to control trade routes and portions of the Golden Plains.

1801: *The Wynding River Valley War II* ends: The Imperial Army of Vhendimmoth sacks Grrell-dast, the capital of the Empire of Uruba, ending the empire.

*Family War I* ends: The D'Alicar use the Hand of D'Alicar to rend S'Grieyl apart. The remaining S'Grieyl counter the magic. Although S'Grieyl is destroyed, so too is D'Alicar.

1813: The *Dracon War* (part of the *Righteous Wars of Vhendimmoth*): Shalantia the Quintescent of Modrain's Keep successfully summons The Chromatic Dragon to Drm. The cosmic dragon is banished by Lan Carlsonian and Mammun the Maker. Mordrain's Keep is destroyed.

1899: Mammun the Maker disappears.

#### **Fourth Age:**

The Golden Age. 1000 years

Parallels Earth's Roman Golden Age

Empires of the time: Vhendimmoth, T'Alimar (elves)

98: Debna Sect becomes the ruler of Ashtur.

100: *Deep Sea II War* begins when Debna betrays the K'Rystas elves and lays siege on neighboring states.

125: *Deep Sea War II* ends and the Ashturian Empire is founded.

126: Asnan is founded.

130: The *Second Family War* begins: The T'Alimar elves engage in battle against the Z'Ythral, those that were the servants of the D'Alicar, over control of the Eternal Forest.

190: The *Coral Battles* begin when Zalphan the Bard and the elves of K'Rystas attack Debna Sect and the Ashturian Empire. The two armies are forced to unite when threatened by the death knight called The Blackiron. Debna and Zalphan disappear fighting The Blackiron beneath Mount Oblivon.

201: The *Second Family War* ends: The T'Alimar, joined by the A'Grabath and B'Ain, defeat the Z'Ythral, consigning them to the Lands Below. The L'Istona, who took no sides, are isolated from their cousins for their indecision.

611: Due to mismanagement, infighting, and barbarian aggression, the Ashturian Empire crumbles.

755: The *War of Iron Wings* between Burquebain and various chirpto nations begins in the summer and ends in the winter.

#### **Fifth Age:**

The Silver Age. 1000 years

Parallels Earth's Roman Silver Age

Empires of the time: Vhendimmoth, T'Alimar

354: The *Golden Plains War*: The Empire of Vhendimmoth, eager to take control of the vast

Golden Plains, colludes with the wastes of Khamund to inflict diseases in the A'Grabath elves and the Curoborian Empire. Disease spreads throughout both sides.

357: Evelyn the Grey confronts the avatar of Khamund in the Creeping Darkness. The avatar is destroyed and Khamund is cast into the Eternal Border. Evelyn becomes a lich.

364: The *Golden Plains War* ends. The Empire of Vhendimmoth pushes the A'Grabathor elves into Worm's Wood and topples the southern portions of the Curoborian Empire.

377: A new Creeping Darkness and legions of undead, controlled by the lich Evelyn the Grey, is defeated by the Silver Army of Vhendimmoth.

378: Evelyn's Keep is founded.

623: The *War of the Unified Crown* begins as chirpto, the dwarves of Burquebain, and the K'Rystas elves unite to battle an extraplanar threat known as the suulj.

624: The *War of the Unified Crown* ends when the humen drive the suulj into the Endless Chasm.

713: *Deep Sea War III* begins when the Hvillet sacks Golhav.

725: *Deep Sea War III* ends with the defeat of Hvillet by Ashtur.

822: Quasii is founded.

#### **Sixth Age:**

The Age of Darkness or the End of Empires. 1000 years

Parallels Earth's Dark Ages

Empires of the time: Vhendimmoth (decline), T'Alimar (decline)

81: The *War of the Blue Mountain* begins when the blue Named One, Euroclydon Stormchurner, unites various hobgoblin nations and attacks the K'Rystas elves and Burquebain.

101: Euroclydon takes control of the Burning Crown.

105: T'Oth Maldran builds his Pointed Towers in Quasii.

106: The dwarf Flindgold Splitplate gravely wounds Euroclydon Stormchurner and drives him and his forces from the Crown of Burquebain, ending the *War of the Blue Mountain*.

265: The *Demon Wars* begin when the T'Alimar king, Uriyen the Green, is tricked by T'Oth Maldran into opening a portal between the realities, allowing thousands of fiends entry into Drm.

266: The Temple of Winds is built in Quasii.

271: T'Oth Maladrán declares his *Forbidden Decree*, binding six gods to his will. The gods are Cabernasus, Lestonises, Malvolans, Masteronus, Ostensis, and Terranolyn.

279: Flindgold Splitplate disappears into the Nine Hells of Perdition battling the Duke of Hell, Caacrinolaas.

280: The *Demon Wars* end: The Seekers of Righteousness quest to find Edifier, the sword of Alleris. With the sword, they confront T'Oth Maldran in the Pointed Towers and destroy his physical form in the fall. In the winter, the Seekers banish the six evil gods back to the Depths Below.

281: *The Turmoil*, Quasii's civil war, begins.

301: *The Turmoil* ends.

630: The Kingdom of Bainland is founded.

700: The *Unnamed War* begins when the Kingdom of Bainland and the B'Ain elves attack the Curoborian Empire.

710: The Bainland king, Karthrike Truthshammer, dies in battle against the forces of Curoboria. The *Unnamed War* ends with the defeat of the Curoborian Empire, allowing Bainland to expand into Reddenwood.

743: Zytun the Dark defeats the Named One Naseus Soulsunder and takes the *Dracovomica*.

754: Zytun the Dark kills the Vhendimmothian Emperor, Thurminaard VII, and becomes the Emperor.

899: The *Battles of Earth and Sky* begin just south of the Crown of Burquebain.

902: The *Battles of Earth and Sky* end.

950: Xyl the Heartless creates the Magistrates and founds the nation of Xyl.

959: Sycolthor the Grand becomes the Emperor of Vhendimmoth.

982: The *Dragonhold* and *The Fall of*

*Vhendimmoth*. The Emperor of Vhendimmoth, Sycolthor the Grand, uses the *Dracovomica* to call dragons to Fortens' Keep to empower forbidden magic. Dragons decimate Drm and fly on Fortens Keep. Sycolthor destroys the dragons and Fortens Keep and much of the heart of Vhendimmoth. He is later killed in the cavern of the Unholy Pools by the Named Ones. Vhendimmoth is destroyed and the *Dragonhold* ends. The *Dragon Orb* is created.

### Seventh Age:

The Age of Despair. 750 years

Parallels Earth's Dark Ages

6: *The Vast Despair*: The Curoborian Empire invades the Vast, taking control of the various independent lands and consigning the hobgoblins and sapiens of the area to slavery.

7: Heaven's Acropolis is built in Evelyn's Keep, becoming the single most important center for Celzarian worship in Drm.

24: Branding of Vhendimmothian refugees in Quasii.

39: War of the Branding begins: Vhendimmothian refugees rise up against Quasii.

40: War of the Branding ends when Vhendimmothian survivors are granted their own land.

200: Sal-Emprius is founded.

### Eighth Age:

The Age of Grey. 750 years

Parallels Earth's Early Middle Ages

75: *The Wars of Burning Grass* begin: The Yahillian tribes oppose settlement attempts by other sapiens.

78: *The Wars of Burning Grass* end: The Yahillian tribes accept an agreement to limited settlements on the southern borders of the Golden Plains.

### Ninth Age:

The Age of Revolutions. 750 years

Parallels Earth's Middle Ages

27: *The Writ of Thanos* is completed in Burquebain. It is Drm's first constitution and establishes the first democratic republic in the continent-realm.

388: Mandl is forged with a conglomerate of dwarves, elves, hobgoblins, and sapiens seeking an alternative for trade without duruban and Deep Sea aggression.

452: The Glass Towers are erected in Quasii instigating the *War of Glass* between supporters of the church of Thore Mire and those of Celzar.

454: The *War of Glass* ends.

#### Tenth Age:

The Age of Glory. 2000 years

High Middle Ages

7: King Urlund Karthrike II of Bainland forges the Noon Alliance with Aring, Carthatis, Glimmerhovel, Immar, and Jaeggertooth.

44: Four ships that had left Evelyn's Port to find lost lands of ancient Vhendimmoth return with news of Tetholas. Trade routes are established between Evelyn's Port and Tetholas.

562: The printing press and steam engine are invented in Burquebain.

799: The *Eastern War*: Border disputes escalate until the Kingdom of Bainland and the elves of A'Grabath and B'Ain go to war against the Curoborian Empire.

804: The *Eastern War* ends: The Curoborian city of Arcan, the last disputed territory in the Krine Hills, is sacked.

1022: The *Bloody Revolt* begins and ends when Archlord Valernus and Pandrila the Great organize resistance against Nimnthon Karthrike's Bainland. The Noon Alliance is shattered and Nimnthon is executed.

1023: Valdeze is founded.

1150: *War of the Green Throne*: Bainland's civil war begins.

1154: The *War of the Green Throne* ends and the Sphere of Power is delivered to the Kingdom of Bainland by Pandrila the Great and Seeroth the Dark.

1155: Seeroth the Dark secretly gives the Sphere of the Mind to the Celzarian priests of Heaven's Acropolis.

1622: *The Screaming Incursion*: The half-fiend drow, Zyxrxzy the Ebon Rage, emerges from his Halls of Screaming Blood and descends into the Eternal Forest, destroying settlements in his wake.

1625: *The Screaming Incursion* ends: Zyxrxzy the Ebon Rage is defeated by a contingency of elven royals led by Dalan the Wanderer.

He is locked in the Halls of Screaming Blood for almost 50 years.

1700: The Forbidden Order is founded in the northern reaches of the Lands Under the Crown

1875: Irprethe, the first permanent chirpto city, is established.

1966: *The Darkhold* begins when Curoboria invades the Kingdom of Bainland and steals the Sphere of Power.

1970: *Time of Chains*: The Demon Prince of Winds, Cabernasus, settles in Quasii, causing untold chaos and woe.

1975: *The Razing of Heaven*: Heaven's Acropolis is destroyed by Zyxrxzy the Ebon Rage when he finds the Sphere of the Mind there.

1987: Euroclydon Stormchurner destroys the Citadel of the Burning Crown and half of Cliver. He is shortly thereafter driven from Burquebain.

1990: *The Battles of Spells and Steel*: Burquebain razes Xyl. Byhoril the Dreaded steals the Sphere of Time from Chronomeer Tower in Bagwin.

1991: *The Siege of Mount Oblivon*: Silverwood Vine and Zyxrxzy the Ebon Rage kill each other. The Blackiron is turned and sealed under the mountain by Sisten Ironledge. Seeroth the Dark obliterates T'Oth Maldran. The Seven Spheres are scattered across the continent-realm. *The Darkhold* ends.

#### Eleventh Age:

The Age of Enlightenment. 550 years

Low Renaissance

15: The Curoborian Empire grants partial independence to the various towns and cities in the Vast.

89: *War of the Beast*: Valdeze and Glimmerhovel go to war due to the manipulations of the church of Ostensis. The Spiral Tower in Valdeze is discovered as a nexus of Ostensis worshippers and is destroyed, ending the war.

102: Glimmerhovel becomes the Kingdom of Eselix.

The Lost Library is built in Evelyn's Keep.

388: Mycrona's Airy establishes ties with Evelyn's Keep.



389: The Ministry is founded.

394: The Curoboria sends thousands of its people in the Eastern Vale. A year later, only two score return, filled with madness.

405: Alleris ceases to answer prayers. A new god, Faeynas, assumes aspects of Alleris' portfolio.

483: *The Upheaval*: The lands of Curoboria are plagued with earthquakes and tempests. Late in the year, a massive explosion issues from the center of the country. The Curoborian Empire ends with the disappearance of the duruban race.

### Twelfth Age:

The Age of Reckoning or the Common Age (now) 197 years

Middle Renaissance

97: The red Named One, Desren the Despised, appears in the Vast and pillages. He extorts monthly virgin sacrifices to be delivered near his layer in the Ash Mountains.

128: *Harvest of the Golden Plains*: The Ministry attacks and swiftly overwhelms the Tribes of Yahilli, incorporating them into the religious order.

147: *The Claimed Land Wars I*. The Kingdom of Eselix and the elves of Wyrmspine Hills go to war against the Ministry.

147: The Lands of the Pact established: a group of powerful adventurers called the Gathered Pact kill the red Named One, Desren the Despised, freeing the Vast from his tyranny. The Gathered unite a minority of the states in the Vast to form the Lands of the Pact in which they serve as nominal rulers.

154: *The Claimed Land Wars I* end. The Kingdom of Eselix suffers enough defeat to abdicate portions of its land to Valdeze and Quasii while the elves retreat into the Hills. The city of Fang's Reach is taken and renamed Sambs although it is not part of the treaty.

182: *The Claimed Land Wars II*

197: Present Day

There are two popular methods of tracking the calendar. The first method, favored by dwarves, hobgoblins, and most northern sapient lands consists of a block dating system. There are three distinct paradigms called the Empire Reckoning (ER), Imperial End Reckoning (IER), and the Mod-

ern Reckoning (MR). The first six ages constitute the ERR, the seventh through tenth ages are under the IER, and the final two are under the MR.

In the south, dates are associated with the given Age. So, *The Darkhold* took place in 1966 AG, or 1966 in the Age of Glory. Most scholars and sages prefer this system since it simplifies the tracking system into little chunks of time.

The parallels to Earth reflect the most advanced culture or society of the time. Not all places were as advanced as Vhendimmoth in the Age of Darkness. Also, parallels takes into account the cultural situation of all Earth empires of the time. So, we can consider China as well as Europe of the Middle Ages (and Marco Polo's Journeys) when comparing Midlorr to Earth.

A final note: observant readers will notice that the Age of Greatness is out of sync in terms of its length of time. This is because all scholars believe that the outrageous and almost inconceivable events during this time are all linked to a degree not observed in the other Ages. This Age, after all, is the Age of the terrible *Darkhold*, an event that rocked Drm and, in a sense, sets the stage for the *Reckoning*. Most scholars, by the way, do not refer to the current Age as the Age of Reckoning, preferring the term, Common Age.

The total recorded history of Drm is 16,997 years.

## Part VI: Epilogue and Glossary

Volstaff laughed. To those that didn't know him, it sounded like an honest laugh. Despite what many initially thought of him, Volstaff was hardly the lush he seemed. Sure, he liked a cold mug heavy with ale, beer, or some other spirit (he had long since made a point of trying the "brew" of every race and every town he came across; so far he had experienced 26 different brews in the year's worth of travel he experienced with the Cleansing Fist). Sure, he liked spinning yarns in the local pub, sharing with those who weren't so lucky to experience the joys of traveling the world, ridding it of selfishness, cruelty, and evil. Sure, he liked to gorge on all the tasty and not-so-tasty food out there; after all, his daddy always told him there was no telling when a drought or famine would strike and that a fat belly was a healthy belly. Sure, Volstaff often looked and smelled like a drunk fool, despite the clearly displayed, if small, silver symbol of Nemaria that always adorned his neck (or "necks," as Mortex often said). But, Volstaff was no fool was rarely, if ever, as drunk as he appeared.

As he laughed, the others glanced at each other. They knew what the laugh meant. His was a laugh of frustration. Volstaff was mighty tired of this Dentun and, although he appreciated the man's courtesy, there was something about him that just chapped his rump. While the other members tried not to look at Volstaff, the duke smiled at him. This smile, unlike most of the others, was not patronizing. Volstaff knew that this man, this librarian (and if he was just a "librarian," Volstaff would swear off spirits for the rest of his life), was aware of his aggravation. Good, the cleric thought, this would make thing simpler.

"Sir," Volstaff said, wiping his eyes, "We've been here for a while now and all you're doing is wasting our time." He fixed the duke with his icy, blue eyes, something he had long since learned made others confess almost anything to him whether they would or not. Although the blessings of Nemaria were always there to help with such things, Volstaff preferred to use the good, old techniques that his daddy used as they were more honest than The Word. "And I must say, it's down right rude."

"I can assure you that it is not my intent to be rude to you or your companions, Volstaff." Dentun

was still smiling, although it seemed less knowing and almost threatening. The man suddenly reminded Volstaff of a feral dog, teeth barred but neither barking nor growling. "I have told you all you are ready to know."

"'Ready to know,' sir? We came to you in good faith. Ibenéz assured us that we would get our money's worth from you, but all you've done is give us riddles and double-speak. Now you say that we're not ready for information we almost died to acquire?" Volstaff's jowls shook under his red face. "I think you have not only wasted our time, but you've insulted us."

Dentun's smile vanished. He carelessly tossed the book onto the table. Volstaff would think on what happened next for a long time, even after they had gone to Mandl to seek out Xpa the Renown. If he did not have faith in his goddess, he would still be scared. He and the others (except Korg) felt the hackles on their necks rise and sweat bead on their skin. As his heart galloped, darkness crept into the room as Dentun leaned close to him, so close that Volstaff could see the man's dark pupils dilate until they seemed to fill his eyes. Volstaff's hand crept to his mace and he could see that Korg, Daerian, and Mortex had their weapons in their hands.

"No, young man, you insult me." The duke's voice was a whisper, yet it was like hearing the quiet comment of a disappointed king. "I have given you much today. Soon, you all will recognize the value of what you think you didn't learn this day. Everything will come full circle and you will realize that you found what you seek."

Suddenly, the duke stood up. The darkness, if it had been there at all, was gone, as was the fear. The duke was smiling again and was looking fondly at the ring Marta had laid out for payment. "Well, I think I have collected my fee for time well spent." He walked to the door and opened it. "Be sure to peruse the library if you'd like. If you should need further lessons, I will be booked for the next seven weeks at the least."

Volstaff did not need to look at the others. He knew that most of them were eager to leave. Probably had been for some time. Korg and Mortex were the only two that appeared ready to challenge the duke, but Volstaff shook his head. He

didn't need to commune with Nemaria to know that there was hardly anything right about any of this. It was time to go and get their answers elsewhere.

Volstaff got to his feet heavily and eased around the table as Mortex left the room with his sword still drawn. Ibenez – who had picked up the *Cilidian* – followed with Daerian close behind. Marta glared at the ring in Dentun's hand, obviously biting her tongue. Volstaff offered the man a final, disappointed look as he left; he heard Korg's armored movements drawing up the rear. In short order, he and the others had reentered the enlightened atrium of the library. Volstaff passed Mortex who was waiting to walk with Korg.

Taking up pace with the dwarf, the young warrior stole a final glance and saw Dentun rise from the dark hallway, towering columns of books on either side of his slender frame. Mortex blinked. For a moment it appeared that the man was not walking, but gliding. The warrior's rationale mind explained it away as an effect of the other's long robes, but his heart was not so certain. If Dentun noticed Mortex's observation, he gave no indication. He had pulled a book from the shelf to his right and held it up which allowed the back to be plainly seen. The book was *Legends of the Last Emperor: Seeroth the Dark of Vhendimmoth* by Xpa the Renown. Slowly, Dentun turned and descended back into the depths of the library.

Mortex had not realized that he had stopped until the pull on his scabbard.

"Hey," Marta snapped. "You coming? I think we can get a decent room at Greenleaf if we hurry."

He heard Volstaff moan lustfully. "I hear that the food's almost as good as the beer."

Mortex turned to the others. He saw their eyes. There would be no questions about this experience, no discussion. Not for a while at any rate. They had uncovered something and still did not know – and didn't think they yet needed to know – what it was. He silently agreed and decided to play the game.

Mortex smiled and rubbed his flat stomach. "Beer? What number will this be to the list, Volstaff?"

As Volstaff began to expound on his number and the quality of the spirits he had thus far experienced, the Cleansing Fist left the Valernus

Library, knowing that soon they would return with the answers they sought and with even more

What follows is a small glossary of terms that have been encountered in this campaign setting introduction. It is by no means an exhaustive list and will grow as more of the world of *The Godspell* is explored.

questions they didn't know they had.

## A GLOSSARY OF MIDLORR

**Agrabathor Jungles:** A massive tropical rain forest north of the Golden Plains. Once a haven for aulspawn. Home of the Ma'el Kith Ken.

**Aldra:** The pantheon of gods that hold sway over the continent-realm of Drm.

**Anninarcus the Grim:** One of Crin's Sacred. Of the four Sacred, Anninarcus was the least known. While he was said to be a man of good intent, he was overshadowed by his peers. During *The Darkhold*, he was lost to hoards of demons in the Halls of Screaming Blood. Anninarcus and Pandrila the Great were lovers and may have had a child.

**Apex the Supreme:** A gold Named One. Perhaps the most powerful non-divine dragon in Drm, Apex the Supreme has rarely been seen in Drm and always briefly. He is said to be the guardian of the Isle of Knowledge.

**Ashtur:** The Gilded City. Ashtur lies in the far northwest Under the Crown of Drm. It is one of the wealthiest, most important cities in Drm. It is ruled by the Ash, open to a diverse array of races and religions, and home of the Black Hall Library.

**Asnan:** The Coral City, the City of Eels. Asnan lies on the eastern banks of the Deep Sea and just southwest of the Barren Peaks. Controlled by an unsteady relationship between the Grand Marshal, the clergy of Bythal Dalax, and the Pirate Lords, the nation of Asnan is best known as the power-center of the Forbidden Order during *The Darkhold*.

**Aul:** The name of the lord of the Saldra. Aul appears to be one of the Others. Aul is a power far greater than the Saldra although it has not had much impact upon the world of Midlorr since *The Clash of Spirits*.

**Aulspawn:** The creations of Aul. These included, among other creatures, dragons, saldrash,

and the soulestra. Many aulspawn were near deific in might and ultimately were responsible for the creation of all lesser races.

**Axe of Destiny:** A powerful dwarven artifact. The Axe of Destiny is the heirloom of the Grand Thane of Burquebain.

**Bainland:** The Green Kingdom. A major kingdom located on a peninsula at the southeast of Deep Sea, Bainland is part of the Ministry. Bainland is known for its vast forests, its magical history, and its ancient feudal system. A king descended from Karthrike Truthshammer rules Bainland; the current king is His Majesty L'Ecrats Karthrike.

**Blackiron, The:** A terrible and powerful figure during both the *Demon Wars* and *The Darkhold*. The Blackiron was one of three known death knights of Drm and one of T'Oth Maldran's lieutenants. The evil deeds of this proxy of the goddess Malvolans were many but none were as significant as the *Battle of Bloodied Iron* during *The Darkhold* that resulted in the destruction of the Deep Sea city of Golhav. The Blackiron is believed sealed way beneath the Mount Oblivon Temple in the Barren Peaks where T'Oth Maldran was defeated at the end of *The Darkhold*.

**Branedeth Horde:** Built during the Silver Age by a greed-possessed dwarf named Branedeth, The Horde is an ancient temple complex lying just outside the city of Parshtons in Ashtur. Historically, it has been associated with the secret treasure of Branedeth (yet to be found), the *mirrors of the realities*, and the Redeemers of the Dark Sovereign. Currently, a powerful Ashturian noble named Lord Duran Oberstool holds claim to and lives in the surface areas of Branedeth Horde.

**Burquebain, Cliver:** The Prince of Satrimmoth; First Thane of Burquebain. It is unknown if this was indeed the name of the last Prince of Satrimmoth, but even dwarves refer to this person as Cliver Burquebain. Cliver Burquebain is considered the Father of Dwarves as he is credited with keeping his race alive long enough to escape from the destruction of Satrimmoth during the Age of Mist until they reached the Crown of Burquebain. He was the first to wield the Axe of Destiny.

**Burquebain, The Thanes' Republic of:** The second land to be controlled and held by dwarves, the Thanes' Republic of Burquebain covers more land than any other nation Under the Crown. Burquebain is located throughout most of the

Crown of Burquebain. Ruled by the Grand Thane and governed by the Thanes' Council, Burquebain is a secretive, isolated place that continues to pave the way for technological advancement in Drm. The current Grand Thane is Emperus Onyxstar.

**Chirpto:** The first race of humen according to the *Cilidian*. Chirpto are extremely tall humen with wings in the place of arms; they possess features akin to bats. Chirpto are characterized as extremely contrary, creative, and secretive.

**Cilidian:** This holy book of unknown origin is used by the sages and scholars and referred to by many wizards and priests. The *Cilidian* recounts what some believe to be the true creation of Midlorr. It also addresses the nature of the gods and is the source of the belief in the *Great Reckoning* and other apocalyptic prophecies. Although no one church truly believes in the *Cilidian* since its writings suggest that no one god is entirely independent of others or their worshippers, none are willing to completely discount the power of the *Cilidian's* messages.

**Clash of Spirits, The:** This is the battle between the three Saldra pantheons, the Aldra, the Drala, and the Sala well before the Age of Mist. The conclusion of *The Clash of Spirits* resulted in the *Pact of Dominance*.

**Continent-realm:** A designation for continents between which natural travel is impossible. There are three known continent-realms on Midlorr: Drm, Linscend, and Oriund. Each has its own pantheon of gods. *The Godspell* unites all three. It is unknown how beings may travel between the three continent-realms but this will eventually be accomplished during the *Great Reckoning*.

**Cosmic Entities:** Beings equivalent to the Saldra in power although not truly divine. Most cosmic entities are older than the Saldra and dwell in the Realities Beyond. Better known cosmic entities include the Seven Virtues of the Celestial Heavens, the Lords of the Nine Hells of Perdition, the Demon Princes of The Abyss, and the Heralds of Holiness in Elysium.

**Crin's Sacred:** The most powerful and best known of the many wizards trained by the archmage, Crin the Sacred. The four are Anninarcus the Grim, Drenicus the Wise, Pandrila the Great, and Seeroth the Dark. Each of Crin's Sacred are distinguished by their utterly black eyes, the result of the potent magic of the Unholy Pool of Immor-

tality merging with their own magical powers when each of them bathed in the Pool's waters. Although immortal, they could be slain. It is believed that only Seeroth the Dark survives among them, although he has not been seen in hundreds of years.

**Crin the Sacred:** One of the greatest, most powerful wizards in Drm, Crin the Sacred was one of the Seekers of Righteousness during the *Demon Wars* of the Age of Darkness. He would later tutor the emperors of Vhendimmoth in the ways of the world and The Word. He trained both Sycolthor the Grand and Seeroth the Dark, and Crin's Sacred are named after him. Unlike most wizards, Crin died a peaceful death after centuries of trying to make the world a better place for all Humanity.

**D'Alicar:** Fifth of the Seven Empires. Dominated by drow elves. D'Alicar broke away from S'Grieyl during the Age of Greatness, instigating the *First Family War*. D'Alicar was destroyed near the end of the Age of Greatness in a huge explosion of arcane power caused by the *Hand of D'Alicar*, a powerful artifact powered by one of the Seven Spheres; the survivors of the disaster became the forerunners of the L'Istona and Z'Ythral Elves. The ruins of D'Alicar lie within Bleakwood in the Desolate South. There are persistent legends that the *Hand of D'Alicar* still survives.

**Dalan the Wanderer:** One of the Questers for *Dracovomica*. Dalan was a lowly T'Alimar elf traveler who joined with Seeroth the Dark early during the latter's quest. He accomplished many great feats during the years prior and during the *Dragonhold*. He would later wed an elven princess and become the King of Sal T'Alimar. Dalan the Wanderer was mortally wounded during *The Darkhold* when he killed the Great Green Wyrms Ghormistax Emeraldeye.

**Darkhold, The:** The greatest, most terrible war in the history of Drm. Beginning 1966 in the Age of Glory, the Great War lasted 25 years. This was the final battle against T'Oth Maldran and it effectively opened the door to the Common Era. Although it started in the Age of Glory, *The Darkhold* has its roots in the Age of Darkness. Although T'Oth Maldran was defeated by the Seekers of Righteousness, he was not dead. His consciousness was scattered, but his will still had power and it manipulated Sycolthor the Grand. As time progressed, his consciousness coalesced into a demilich and he slowly began to call the most talented, vile people to his banner. Through such people across the north, Maldran would consoli-

date his influence to create huge political power to wage war to distract the powers of balance and righteousness from his return and true goal: the acquisition of the Seven Spheres. However, Seeroth the Dark, heir to the Scepter of Vhendimmoth, knew of Maldran's threat and had consolidated his own forces across Drm, although he did not share with his allies the truth of Maldran's continued existence. Officially, *The Darkhold* started when the forces of Curoboria attacked Bainland in an attempt to acquire The Sphere of Power. Due to various treaties and fear, the various nations of the Wynding River Valley and others came to defend Bainland's claim to the Sphere, becoming the Noon Alliance, as the northern nations of the Foreboding Order sought out more political power as their agents scattered across Drm seeking out the Spheres. When the five Demon Princes were re-summoned to Drm in the Ruins of Hrugtha in 1968, the learned became aware of the deeper threat of the war and many of the greatest heroes of the day came to support Seeroth the Dark, the Forces of Noon, or the cause of righteousness. *The Darkhold* ended with the *Siege of Mount Oblivon* during which many of the now legendary heroes and villains of the time were killed. T'Oth Maldran himself was slain by Seeroth the Dark.

**Darkmorph:** Spirits of evil and chaos. These demons were created from the remains of the mother of the evil warlord, Zyxxrxzy the Ebon Rage. These fell spirits were the cause of much terror during *The Darkhold*. When Zyxxrxzy died, darkmorphs apparently went with him; however, some adventurers have claimed to have seen creatures resembling darkmorphs over the past few years. The truth of this has yet to be determined.

**Debna Sect:** First Lord of Ashtur. Perhaps the greatest sapient general and leader in Drmian history, Debna Sect was an Ashturian who through diplomacy and war united the Deep Sea for the bulk of his long life. He spread Ashturian culture across the area. Debna Sect disappeared in 180 of the Golden Age during the *Second Deep Sea War* doing battle against the death knight called The Blackiron.

**Demon Wars:** This devastating conflict lasted just over fifteen years, beginning in the spring of 265 ADR. Tricked by T'Oth Maldran, the wizard-king of the Kingdoms of T'Alimar Uriyens the Green cast a powerful spell designed to give everlasting life to the Eternal Forest and its inhabitants. Instead, the spell opened a portal to the

Depths Below. The spell ripped the fabric of reality, allowing hordes of fiends to swarm into Drm. Accompanying them were six evil Aldra, Cabernasus, Lestonises, Malvolans, Masteronus, Ostensis, and Terranolyn and a number of cosmic daemons, demons, and devils. The spell destroyed much of the southern Eternal Forest as well as the ancient elven home, T'Alimar. Holistically referred to as "demon princes" by the people of Drm, the evil Aldra and their servants wreaked havoc as they established rulership across the continent-realm. Six locations were dominated: Quasii for Cabernasus, Mandl for Lestonises, Vhendimmoth for Malvolans, Duroc for Masteronus, Yahilli for Ostensis, and the Agrabathor Jungle for Terranolyn. The priesthoods, with the powerful backing of their gods quickly took control of these lands, turning them into bloody cesspools of madness and despair. Almost immediately, the priesthoods engaged in outright combat with each other. However, through unknown means, T'Oth Maldran gained power from the deaths of the gods' servants, allowing him to become a very powerful lich. Directed by the gods Celzar and Nemaria, heroes known as the Seekers of Righteousness were called to stop the fiends who were eventually unified under T'Oth Maldran. While the *War* took a more organized turn, the Seekers of Righteousness sought the Sword of Alleris, Edifier. They determined that T'Oth Maldran was behind the entire affair and destroyed his mortal form, scattering his sentience across Drm for a time. Then, they tricked the evil Aldra, who were once again free to do as they pleased, into battling at the Temple of Winds in Quasii where *Edifier* banished them to their realms. Although the *Demon Wars* were ended, years of chaos reigned over Drm.

**Desolate South:** Named for the deadly environs and creatures therein, the Desolate South is said to hold many secrets and possibly answers to the ancient times of Drm and Midlorr. Locations within the Desolate South include Bleakwood, The Crimson Peaks, the Dead Coast, and the largest mountain in Drm, Arxth Maximmuth.

**Dewkisser, Qu'Lar:** A Queen of Sal-Talimar. Qu'Lar Dewkisser was one of the Seekers of Righteousness and a cousin to Uriyens the Green. Aside from Crin the Sacred, she was the only Seeker to survive the horrors of the *Demon Wars*. Qu'Lar went on to become the Queen of Sal T'Alimar. She is the aunt-in-law of Dalan the Wanderer.

**Doblin:** Second of the Seven Empires. Domi-

nated by hobgoblins. What little is known of the Doblin Empire is taken from surviving Satrimmothian texts. Apparently, the Doblin lived in the lands of the Great Kharsis Desert. Although it is unclear how the Doblin Empire fell, it is known that many ruins can be found throughout the southern portions of the Desert and into the Lush of the Desolate South.

**Dominion of Humen:** The 12 known Ages of Drm. The *Dominion of Humen* reflects the idea that there were Ages prior to the *Dominion of Humen*, although most place such Ages within the Dawn Before the Dawn. The *Cilidian* suggests that there will be at least one more Age during the *Dominion of Humen*, bringing the count to 13.

**Dracovomica:** An extremely powerful artifact of unknown origin, it had the ability to control as well as duplicate the powers of dragons. This weapon was supposedly used by the Founder of Vhendimmoth, Fortens, to defeat the Dragon King, Tasler the Radiant. Afterwards, it was held for ages by the Named One, Naseus Soulsunder, who ultimately lost it to Zytun the Dark early in 282 of the Age of Darkness. *Dracovomica* remained with the Darks until Sycolthor the Grand used it to begin the *Dragonhold*. *Dracovomica* was almost completely destroyed when it fell into the Unholy Pool of Oblivion. The sole surviving aspect of *Dracovomica* is known as the *Orb of Dragons*. Although extremely powerful, like all artifacts, *Dracovomica* had at least one flaw: in titanic battles against dragons, it is always guaranteed to fail. Some scholars suggest that *Dracovomica* fueled its wielders with tremendous arrogance and pride.

**Dragonhold:** This event occurred during the final days of the Age of Darkness, beginning during the summer of 982 and ending in the very same winter. Enticed by a prophecy promising him power, the emperor of Vhendimmoth, Sycolthor the Grand, sought to feast on the souls of his people through an *ascension* spell, magic forbidden in Drm. Forcing the people of Vhendimmoth and beyond to swear total allegiance to him, Sycolthor, wielding *Dracovomica*, forced thousands of dragons to attack his people. However, in an unwitting attempt to stop the attacks, Sycolthor's nephew and heir to the Scepter of Vhendimmoth, Seeroth the Dark, stole *Dracovomica* on a quest to kill the dragon, Morganshium Maximuth. The loss of the *Dracovomica* allowed the enraged dragons to fly to Vhendimmoth's capital, Forten's Keep. Prepared for such an occurrence, Sycolthor destroyed both the city and most of Drm's dragons with an especially potent *devastation* spell.

Fleeing to the cavern of the Unholy Pools, Sycolthor, once again wielding *Dracovomica*, faced the Named Ones themselves. Sycolthor the Grand was ultimately slain, his body falling into the Pool of Fates. The Empire of Vhendimmoth, the last and greatest of the humen empires, ended.

**Dragons:** One of the Aulspawn races, dragons are the most powerful non-divine beings in Drm. There are numerous kinds of dragons, although two types, the chromatic and the metallic, are the best known. All dragons can be traced back to the first two dragons, Tasler the Radiant and Vhendimmoth, and all are immortal. Other powerful dragons include Bahamut, Etheryl the Lost, Tasler Mori, Tiamat, T'Ur Maul, and the infamous Named Ones. In the *Cilidian*, dragons were the original rulers of Drm and at enmity with the saldrash; their rule was ended during the *Aulspawn War*. The *Cilidian* foretells that dragons will rise up united three times during the *Dominion of Humen*. So far, this has happened twice. The first occurred during the *War of Wyrms*, which resulted in the death of Tasler the Radiant. The second was the *Dragonhold*, which resulted in the destruction of most dragons in Drm. The *Final Flight of the Dragons* will occur during the final days of *Great Reckoning* as the Named Ones and the Elder Dragons do all they can to destroy the Keeper of the Seven. It is believed that no more than 100 chromatic and metallic dragons remain in Drm.

**Dragons, Elder:** Dragons of cosmic or divine power. According to the *Cilidian*, Elder Dragons are the first dragons. The Elder Dragons include Bahamut, Lord of the North Wind; Etheryl the Lost Prince; Tasler Mori; Tasler the Radiant, the King of Dragons; Tiamat, Queen of Dragons, and T'Ur Maul, and Vhendimmoth, the Great Dragon.

**Drala:** According to the *Cilidian*, the pantheon of gods that held sway over the continent-realm of Oriund. They numbered seven. It is believed that they were destroyed by their worshippers.

**Drenicus the Wise:** One of Crin's Sacred, Drenicus was the childhood friend of Seeroth the Dark. As his surname suggests, Drenicus was the wisest of Crin's pupils and often served as Seeroth's conscience. Of the four Sacred, he lived the most normal life for an immortal wizard, marrying and having children whose descendents live on to this day. Drenicus was killed by the Demon Prince of Winds, Cabernasus, during *The Darkhold*; his actions banished the Demon Prince

of Winds from Drm and dealt a serious blow to the Forbidden Order.

**Drm:** The smallest of the three continent-realms of the planet Midlorr. This is the realm from which the Keeper of the Seven Spheres will emerge.

**Duruban:** The fifth race of humen according to the *Cilidian*, they seem to have gone extinct. Duruban were of a height and build similar to sapiens; however, they possessed no body hair, had bony protrusions along their joints, and were almost wrinkleless. Duruban, as a race, were xenophobic.

**Dwarves:** The fourth race of humen according to the *Cilidian*. Dwarves are shorter and broader than sapiens, tend to have rough, stone-like skin, heavy beards, and stern, uncompromising demeanors. They are considered to be the progenitors of technology, letters, The Word (as an organized form of study rather than a natural act), and civilization.

**Edifier:** The Sword of Righteousness and the sword of the god, Alleris the Knight. *Edifier* was used by the Seekers of Righteousness during the *Demon Wars* to defeat T'Oth Maldran and banish the "Demon Princes" back to the Depths Beyond. Since the silence of Alleris during the *Barthrax Crisis*, the whereabouts of *Edifier* is unknown.

**Elves:** The third race of humen according to the *Cilidian*. Elves are tall and slender, possess large, almond shaped eyes, pointed ears, and strangely beautiful and seductive colorations. Elves are chaotic, oblivious to time, of goodly bend, and practitioners of great magic. Elves are immortal.

**Epoch Nodes:** The Gates of the Lands Below. It is unknown who or what created the Epoch Nodes, although many legends point to the saldrash. Epoch Nodes come in a variety of appearances and sizes, although most tend to be pillar-like, made from a nameless black stone, covered in eldritch lights, and of edifice size. Epoch Nodes are always placed in groups of threes, fours, or sevens and seem capable of forcing those consigned to the Lands Below to their fate within 100, 300, or 700 feet underground. It is believed that the Epoch Nodes actually require some sort of "battery" to keep them in working order and that in the near future, since no one knows what powers them, they will begin to malfunction and open the Lands Below.

**Euroclydon Stormchurner:** A blue Named One. A vicious, tyrannical dragon, Euroclydon has been a terror to the dwarves, chirpto, and sapiens that live in the Crown of Burquebain. Euroclydon was the instigator behind the *War of the Blue Mountain* and he is credited with completely destroying the largest citadel of all time, the Burning Crown of Burquebain, during *The Darkhold*. His current whereabouts are unknown.

**Evelyn the Grey:** A powerful Imperial Sentinel of the Vhendimmothian Empire, Evelyn the Grey is best known for her descent into despair and lichdom.

**Evelyn's Keep:** The City of Gold. The wealthiest and largest of the cities in the Golden Plains of Vhendimmoth, Evelyn's Keep is named after Evelyn the Grey in remembrance of the great Imperial Sentinel before her descent into undeath. Evelyn's Keep was once the location of a huge temple dedicated to Celzar that was razed during *The Darkhold* by the Forbidden Order. Evelyn's Keep is believed to be the home of the legendary Lost Library, which supposedly holds every book known to Drm.

**Fairy Queen:** The Fairy Queen is the ruler of the Noon Woods and the locations therein. It is unknown how long she has resided in the Woods, much less her power, but she appears to be dedicated to goodness. She seems to be a warden of sorts, ensuring that the evil contained within the Twilight Forest, and the mysteries of Noon Woods, remain where they are.

**Family War:** The *Family Wars* of the elves, of which there were two, involved the direction of the elven race as a whole. The *First Family War* occurred during the Age of Greatness when the D'Alidar elves broke away from S'Grieyl due to the formers' worship of demons. The end of the *War* resulted in the annihilation of D'Alidar and the sundering of S'Grieyl. Many elves then traveled into the Eternal Forest where another series of conflict erupted between the A'Grabath, B'Ain, L'Istona, T'Alimar, and Z'Ythral families during the Golden Age. In the aftermath of the *Second Family War*, the Z'Ythral were consigned to the Lands Below.

**Forbidden Magic:** Magic decreed unlawful by the Saldra after the *Clash of Spirits*. Such magic, when cast, ruptures Midlorr and the caster(s). Sometimes this rupture is minor while at other times it is cataclysmic. Well known forbidden magic include *ascension*, *devastation*, and *gate*.

**Forbidden Order, The:** The name associated with T'Oth Maldran's order during the *Demon Wars* and *The Darkhold*. It was named after Maldran's persistent use of forbidden magic. Also referred to as the Foreboding Order.

**Forbidden Circle, The:** The name associated with T'Oth Maldran's chief lieutenants during *The Darkhold*. The Forbidden Circle was composed of The Blackiron, Byhoril the Dreaded, K'th S'yprin, Mathborin IX, Sylara of Irprethe, Grand Marshall Tyz, and Zyxrxzy the Ebon Rage.

**Fortens the Founder:** The Father of the Vhendimmothian Empire. According to legend, Fortens was a wise and brave king of a tribe of Yahillans that lived under the rule of the dragon Vhendimmoth. Angered at the abuse they suffered, Fortens sought justice and his prayers were answered by Randella and her goddess, Thore Mire. With the wisdom of Randella and Thore Mire, Fortens succeeded in slaying Vhendimmoth. However, Vhendimmoth was the mate of Tasler the Radiant. Enraged at her death, Tasler swore to destroy all sapiens starting with Fortens and his people; the King of Dragons called all of his children to carry out this task, beginning the *War of Wyrms*. Fortens, trusting in Thore Mire, was guided to the Unholy Pools where he found the *Dracovomica*. With this mighty artifact, he drove the dragons from his people and fought Tasler the Radiant. Although he slew the dragon, *Dracovomica* failed Fortens just as Tasler unleashed his final breath. Fortens died saving his people and all sapiens. He is known as the Founder and as the Father of Vhendimmoth. The spot on which he died was where the foundation of Forten's Keep was established.

**Glidian, The:** The heavenly realm of the good Aldra where the souls of the holy dead go to rest until the *Great Reckoning*. There is no apparent relationship to this word and the *Cilidian*.

**Gnomes:** Slightly taller than kin, gnomes are slender of body, have slightly pointed ears, longer than average noses, and the males sport small, intricately tended beards. Gnomes are said to be result of extensive dwarven and elven interbreeding, a suggestion both elves and dwarves deny.

**Godspell, The:** The source of all Existence and Reality, *The Godspell* is the total sum of the True God that destroyed itself in order to allow true freedom to its creations. Divided into three parts, *The Godspell* is comprised of the Seven Spheres (the Power of God), the Seven Oracles (the Mind



of God), and the Seven Scrolls or Great Mosaic (the Word of God). It is the acquisition of *The Godspell* that has fueled the course of Midlorr's unified history. *The Godspell* will be "cast" by the legendary Keeper of the Seven during the *Great Reckoning*, ending Creation as it currently exists.

**Great Reckoning:** The term used to describe the End of Times in the *Cilidian*. During this terrible event, the Keeper of the Seven will emerge and seek to unite the Seven Spheres with the Seven Oracles and the Great Mosaic, casting *The Godspell*. While the Keeper assumes his or her role, the gods and cosmic entities will break the *Pact of Dominance* in an attempt to stop the Keeper. Many beings will be destroyed during until the Keeper ultimately accomplishes his or her destiny and becomes the True God. Many do not believe that the *Great Reckoning* will occur, but it is known that many of the events heralding the imminent approach of this time seemed to have taken place depending on how one reads the *Cilidian*.

**Grey Few, The:** A little known confederation of shadowy men and women, The Grey Few are collectors of rare and thought-to-be lost items. It does not matter if the articles are enchanted or not so long as they are rare.

**Hallucimain the Deceiver:** A black Named One. Hallucimain is the shadowy, self-proclaimed lord of Agrabathor Jungles and is worshipped by the Ma'el Kith Ken of that land. Hallucimain is best known as the holder of the Sphere of the Mind during *The Darkhold* and for his interest in powerful swords.

**Hand of D'Alicar:** The powerful artifact of the Empire of D'Alicar. The *Hand of D'Alicar* would be wielded by the rulers of D'Alicar throughout the *First Family War* and at one point one of the Seven Spheres was actually held in its palm. The *Hand of D'Alicar* betrayed its users in the final days of the *First Family War* resulting in the end of the D'Alicar and S'Grieyl Empires. Its present location is unknown.

**Heroes of Noon, The:** The legendary Heroes of Noon are associated with many adventures and battles during *The Darkhold*. Led by the enigmatic Seeroth the Dark, the Heroes of Noon are credited with stopping T'Oth Maldran from using the power of the Seven Spheres. The Heroes of Noon were: the kin Arien Shadow; Drenicus the Wise; the dwarves, Branth Knotchammer and Xrt Byndar; the elves, Athia Thistletoe and Silzen Silverhaired;

the half-elf, Silverwood Vine; the holy knight, Xisten Ironledge; and the Last Emperor of Vhendimmoth, Seeroth the Dark.

**Hidden Hand, The:** This mysterious organization is only known to a few Seeker groups. So far, a few Seeker groups have disappeared, leading some to suspect that the Hidden has a deadly aspect to their clandestine intent. Their true goals are unknown.

**Hobgoblins:** The fifth race of humen according to the *Cilidian*. Hobgoblins are slightly larger than sapiens, covered with hair, and possess large canines. They are extremely militarilistic, sinister, and merciless.

**Humen:** The race of beings created by the saldrash. Said to have been created at the mountain city known as Arxth Maximmoth in the Desolate South, the humen races are destined to find and cast *The Godspell*. The humen races are: chirpto, kin, elves, dwarves, hobgoblins, duruban, and sapiens.

**Irudyte:** One of the saldrash races, the irudyte were the most wholly sinister of their kind. Little is known of the irudyte. In the *Saldrash War*, the irudyte were banished to the Lands Below where they remain. It is said that in the *Great Reckoning* that the irudyte will be released from their imprisonment to bring woe and terror to all of Midlorr.

**K'Rystas, The Kingdoms of:** The Land of the Crystal Elves. The Kingdoms of K'Rystas constitute the most northern of the elven Families and are counted as the noblest elves currently living in Drm. K'Rystas is ruled by the High King of the Exalted Forest whose name is not known to non-Elves.

**Keeper of the Seven:** The Savior of Midlorr; the Destroyer of Midlorr. The Keeper of the Seven is the prophesied hero or heroine destined to not only acquire and partake of the Seven Spheres, but also to activate them with the Seven Oracles and to physically become one with The Word of the Seven Scrolls. The Keeper is destined to emerge from the continent-realms of Midlorr. The coming of the Keeper of the Seven is said to be heralded by huge catastrophes as the world of Midlorr rebels against the gods, cosmic entities, and aulspawn. His or her appearance will mark the beginning of the *Great Reckoning*. Many throughout history have tried to force Fate to decree them the Keeper of the Seven. The best known would-be Keepers were T'Oth Maldran,

orchestrator of the *Demon Wars* and *The Darkhold*, and Sycolthor the Grand, orchestrator of the *Dragonhold*.

**Kin:** The second race of humen according to the *Cilidian*. Kin are small, comparable in size to young sapien children. They have pointed ears but otherwise resemble small, slender sapiens. Kin are nomadic, possess strong charismas, and little concept of ownership or responsibility. They are immortal. Of all the humen races, kin are the only one who never established their own lands.

**Kran:** One of the saldrash races, the kran were the rulers of the seas and oceans. During the *Saldrash War*, they exiled themselves to the seas. It is said that the kran still exist beneath the waters surrounding Drm and that at times they will either help or hinder sailors depending on their want. During the *Great Reckoning*, the kran will rise from the seas to make war against humen and the Keeper of the Seven.

**Lands Below, The:** The World Under Midlorr. The Lands Below are the subterranean dwellings of beings banished to everlasting darkness. The Lands Below are empowered by the Epoch Nodes, the Gates of Below. The *Cilidian* states that the Lands Below were created by the saldrash during the Dawn Before the Dawn where in they initially consigned the irudyte and the zar. It is said that other races, including the drow, and some foul enemies of the Heroes of Noon are likewise trapped in the Lands Below. When the *Great Reckoning* occurs, the Epoch Nodes will fall and the denizens of the Lands Below will rush to the surface to avenge their millennia long entrapment.

**Linscend:** One of the three continent-realms of Midlorr. Linscend is home of the Sala, one of the Saldra sub-groups. Discovery of a passage to Linscend will precede the *Great Reckoning*.

**Magistrates:** Founded by Xyl the Heartless, these powerful wizards once ruled the city-state of Xyl until the Savants of the Mist drove them from the north. Through bizarre manipulations of magic, the Magistrates rank among the most powerful practitioners of The Word in Drm. However, they hate and are hated by the Aldra.

**Maldran, T'Oth:** The greatest non-deific enemy of Drm, T'Oth Maldran was the direct cause of two of the greatest wars of Drm, the *Demon Wars* and *The Darkhold*; he was arguably responsible for the *Dragonhold* as well. Once Celzar's greatest priest,

Maldran was seduced by Dauth Alman. Believing himself superior to the Aldra, Maldran decided that he was the Keeper of the Seven and, through unknown means, used massive amounts of forbidden magic, as well as trickery, lies, and threats, to bind untold millions to his will, including some Aldra. He created his Forbidden Order and persecuted the *Demon Wars* in order to gain power from the death of his own servants by using an *ascension* spell. However, before he could reap the rewards of the spell his mortal form was killed by the Seekers of Righteousness; he became a demi-lich. Although empowered, Maldran was never-the-less in limbo for centuries until the reign of Zytun the Second. Manipulating the dreams the Darks had been having for centuries, Maldran enticed Zytun to abdicate the Scepter of Vhendimmoth to his brother, Sycolthor. Sycolthor the Grand, in turn, caused the *Dragonhold* in his failed attempt to become the Keeper of the Seven. Believing all threats to his ascendancy removed, Maldran slowly took control of many northern nations, promising power in his new Creation if they helped him acquire the Seven Spheres. Through them, Maldran started *The Darkhold*. However, despite his power, Maldran was completely *obliterated* by the Last Emperor of Vhendimmoth, Seeroth the Dark. T'Oth Maldran is utterly destroyed; not even his spirit exists.

**Mammun the Maker:** The most powerful wizard of all time, Mammun the Maker's numerous exploits have garnered him the enviable position as the second best known wizard (after his descendent, Seeroth the Dark). Mammun is credited with innumerable feats including the *Excavation of Yahilli*, the *Chaining of Tasler Mori*, the *Purging of the Unholy Pools*, and the banishment of Tiamat the Chromatic Dragon. By the time he disappeared, his power was on par with that of a demi-god. Unknown assailants supposedly killed Mammun during the end of the Age of Greatness while he traveled in the Desolate South on a quest to slay the Named One, Morganshium Maximuth.

**Merchants of Kharsis, The:** The largest thieves' guild in Drm, the Merchants of Kharsis originate from the Great Kharsis Desert and the city of Klm. Their leader(s) unknown, the Merchants of Kharsis are involved in every kind of criminal activity from assassinations to kidnappings to slavery. Their symbol is a vulture or eagle over a desert clutching a coin in its talon. Merchants of Kharsis appear to be immortal.

**Midlorr:** The name of the planet in which *The*

*Godspell* is hidden. Comprised of three, separate continent-realms including Drm, Linscend, and Oriund.

**Ministry, The:** A powerful theocracy that controls a large amount of land in the Wynding River Valley, the Ministry controls seven major nations and kingdoms as well as numerous independent cities and towns. The Ministry believes that Celzar is the one true god in three aspects, Celzar the Warrior, Vhanthermis the Judge, and Faeynas the Purifier. Spirits of goodness serves this one god, including the four Archangels, Lanira, Nemaria, Pyaras, and Thore Mire. From this viewpoint, Celzar is in perpetual war with his “brother”, Dauth Alman and his army of evil. The Ministry is comprised of three lines: the priest line, the angelic orders, and the Riders of Justice. The priests, called ministers, are all direct worshippers of Celzar while the clerics of the angelic orders worship Celzar through the Archangels. The Riders of Justice are the military branch of the Ministry. There is a fourth, unofficial branch of the Ministry known as the Light’s Shadow, or the Viziers. These agents seek to ensure the will of the Ministry throughout Drm; they also actively hunt down those who have blasphemed the Ministry. The Ministry despises The Word and elves. The Ond leads the Ministry.

**Mirrors of the Realities, The:** Powerful artifacts that allow a connection with the Realities Beyond. According the legend, there were three *mirrors of the realities* created by the Sorcerers of Satrimmoth during the Age of Mist. The *mirrors of the realities* allowed the dwarven wizards to peer into and interact with the entities that exist elsewhere in Creation, including cosmic and divine realms. One *mirror* was destroyed during the destruction of Satrimmoth while another was destroyed during *The Darkhold*. The location of the final *mirror* is unknown, although rumors persist that priests of Dauth Alman hold it in their possession.

**Morganshium Maximuth:** A red Named One. Morganshium was the deadliest dragon of all time. He killed untold thousands. Morganshium was an enemy of Vhendimmoth and was so powerful that, by the time of the *Dragonhold*, Emperor Sycolthor the Grand actually asked for adventurers to find and kill the beast. After numerous battles and thousands of lives, these adventures, the Questors for Dracovomica, succeeded in killing Morganshium with the aid of another Named One, Eurstex the Glorious.

**Named Ones:** These are the greatest, longest-lived, and most powerful of dragons aside from the Elder Dragons, surpassing even great wyrms. Their longevity and might are as such that their names, deeds, and appearances are ingrained in the consciousness of all mortals who behold them. Each is destined to play a pivotal role in the *Great Reckoning*.

**Naseus Soulsunder:** A green Named One. Possibly the best known dragon in Drm, the dark deeds of this sinister dragon have been overlooked due to his legendary relationship with the archmage, Seeroth the Dark. Naseus held Dracovomica, acquiring the relic shortly after it was used to kill Tasler the Radiant. The war wizard, Zytun the Dark, took Dracovomica from Naseus shortly after the *Demon Wars*, *imprisoning* the dragon inside the artifact. Zytun’s descendant, Seeroth the Dark, ultimately freed Naseus. In return for his freedom, the two made a pact of non-aggression that would serve Seeroth for years to come. Naseus played a pivotal role during *The Darkhold* that allowed Seeroth to *obliterate* T’Oth Maldran during the *Siege of Mount Oblivon*. Naseus has possessed at least two of the Seven Spheres during his immense life, although he never attempted to use them. He lairs in the Moog of the Eternal Forest.

**Noon Woods:** Located about 120 miles northwest of Valdeze and 108 miles southeast of Mandl, the Noon Woods are an ancient, enchanted area that holds many mysteries. The Noon Woods have been in existence since the Age of Mist and are a place of perpetual sunlight. The Woods are feared by all because of their ability to trap the careless for long periods of time during which they are immortal. The Woods are known for their fey creatures and for three important locations: Tasler Mori’s Lair, the Twilight Forest, and the cavern of the Unholy Pools. It was here that Seeroth the Dark called the Noon Council during *The Darkhold*. The mysterious and powerful Fairy Queen rules the Noon Woods.

**Oriund:** The largest of Midlorr’s continent-realms. Oriund is the home of the Seven Scrolls and has drawn the interest of cosmic entities. Oriund will be the location in which the Keeper of the Seven will ascend into the Realities Beyond during the *Great Reckoning*.

**Others, The:** These mysterious beings are mentioned numerous times in the *Cilidian*. Apparently, they are the deputies of a greater power that created the Cosmos. Drawing from the *Cilid-*

ian's information, these creatures are even more powerful than the greatest of gods. There are seven Others, suggesting that they are somehow related to *The Godspell*. Their precise nature, roles, and goals are unknown.

**Pact of Dominance, The:** A law agreed upon by the Saldra dictating that no god may set foot on Midlorr. "Drafted" to end the *Clash of Spirits*, the intent of the *Pact* is to keep any Saldra from acquiring *The Godspell*. The *Pact* also stipulates the kinds of magic that can be used to circumvent its intent; this magic is referred to as forbidden. The *Pact* forced the three pantheons, the Aldra, the Drala, and the Sala, from interfering with each other's continent-realms. The success of the *Pact* has been drawn into question by a number of gods. When the *Pact* is officially broken by the gods, the *Great Reckoning* will begin.

**Pandril the Great:** One of Crin's Sacred, Pandril was the best known female wizard in Drm. Pandril was the most forthright and deadly of the four, willing to do anything to see her demands met. After she became immortal, Pandril served as a counselor to the Kingdom of Bainland. Although her centuries of aid helped the Bainland Kingdom grow, the corrupt monarchy eventually prompted her to facilitate the assassination of the king, Nimnthron Karthrike and his advisors. Later, during *The Darkhold*, she single-handedly battled the Named One, Hallucimain the Deceiver, in Agrabathor Jungle, apparently killing both herself and the Dragon, and allowing the Heroes of Noon to acquire the Sphere of the Mind. She and Anninarcus the Grim had a child, although what became of it is unknown.

**Realities Beyond:** The abodes of gods and cosmic entities. The Realities Beyond constitute the physical and spiritual components of Midlorr. There are four distinct portions of the Realities Beyond: The Land of Dreams or ethereal plane, the Endless Boundary or the astral plane, the Inner Realities of Matter, and the Outer Realities of Spirits.

**S'Grieyl:** The second of the Seven Empires. Dominated by elves. S'Grieyl was the most powerful of all the Empires. It controlled much of what is now known as the Desolate South and it is from S'Grieyl that all the current elven Families hail. S'Grieyl was torn apart from a mixture of slave revolts from duruban and sapiens, as well as from the *First Family War*. S'Grieyl lost its status as an Empire during the Age of Greatness. Most of S'Grieyl was consumed by Bleakwood.

**Saldra:** The divine pantheon of Midlorr. According to the *Cilidian*, the Saldra all hate each other and this hatred forced them to divide into three separate camps after the *Clash of Spirits* and the crafting of the *Pact of Dominance*. The camps and their respective continent-realms are: the Aldra for Drm, the Drala for Oriund, and the Sala for Linscend.

**Sal T'Alimar, Kingdoms of:** The New Home of T'Alimar. Sal Talimar is currently the largest elven land in Drm. Sal T'Alimar is the legacy of T'Alimar, the last of the elven empires that was destroyed at the onset of the *Demon Wars*. The survivors traveled north into the Eternal Forest and there started anew. Sal T'Alimar is the home of legendary elven heroes like Dalan the Wanderer, Silzen Silverhaired, and Athia Thistletoe.

**Saldrash:** The most successful of the aul-spawn. According to the *Cilidian*, the saldrash were created in the image of the gods and were granted vast power over Midlorr, which they were instructed to defend against outside intrusion. The saldrash divided into four camps that each had opposing ideas as to how to defend Midlorr. The kran sought to hide all beneath the oceans; the irudyte wished to rule the world through strength of the mind; the zar desired to destroy all Creation; and the "true" saldrash believed that they were destined to use cast *The Godspell*. The true saldrash succeeded in defeating their former brethren and imprisoned them during the *Saldrash War*. In the Dawn Before the Dawn, the saldrash would create the city of Arxth Maxim-muth, create the Unholy Pools, and craft the seven humen races. The *Cilidian* claims that the saldrash used the Seven Spheres to *ascend* into the heavens and they have never been seen again.

**Sapiens:** The seventh and final humen race according to the *Cilidian*. Sapiens are the most prolific of the humen race and tend to refer to themselves as humans. Although individually short-lived, sapiens have guided the history of Drm for over 10,000 years.

**Satrimmoth:** The first of the Seven Empires. Composed entirely of dwarves. What little is known of the Satrimmothian Empire was acquired from the *Cilidian* and the few released texts offered by Burquebain. Satrimmoth is credited with the development of many elements of civilization including the alphabet, concepts of mathematics, the basics of science, and the idea that The Word can be manipulated through training. The Six

Swords of Satrimmoth emerged from Satrimmoth before the empire was destroyed by a huge upheaval of magical energy. The people of Burquebain are the descendants of the survivors of Satrimmoth. The ruins of Satrimmoth are scattered across the Desolate South, particularly among the Crimson Peaks.

**Secluded Mountain Order:** The largest, best known aesthetic-fighting order known in Drm, the Secluded Mountain Order was started shortly after the conclusion of *The Darkhold* to defend order and law to preclude the chance of another *Darkhold* or T'Oth Maldran. How the monks of the Secluded Mountain Order accomplish this task is unknown to the outside world. The Secluded Mountain Order's Secluded Home is located in the Crown of Burquebain north of Ashtur.

**Seekers:** A confederacy of adventurers that travel Drm seeking knowledge and truth. Although not precisely unified as a group, Seekers share a number of characteristics. All seem of a goodly bend; all are composed of extremely talented, potentially powerful individuals; all have a great interest in uncovering truths; all seem to have an interest in ancient mysteries; all have an interest in *The Godspell*; and all claim to know the whereabouts of Seeroth the Dark.

**Seekers of Righteousness, The:** The legendary heroes associated with the *Demon Wars*. Unlike most other heroic bands, the Seekers of Righteousness were men and women filled with doubt and pain who nevertheless rose to defeat T'Oth Maldran and the so-called "Demon Princes." They also wielded Edifier, the Sword of Righteousness. The Seekers of Righteousness included: Crin the Sacred, who became one of Drm's greatest Speakers of The Word; Delena of Bainland, a Child of Nemaria; Kistar the Soulless, the Wielder of Edifier; Sorl'S "Cookedhorn", a duruban of Curoboria; Qu'Lar Dewkisser, an elf from T'Alimar; Eye'Ya the Lame, a chirpto; and Yaya Nettle, a kin. At the end of their quest, only Crin the Sacred and Qu'Lar Dewkisser survived.

**Seeroth the Dark:** One of Crin's Sacred, Seeroth is the best-known wizard in Drm's history. Of Crin's Sacred, he was the most cerebral and charismatic, able to lead and encourage countless people. Seeroth was the son of the Vhendimmothian Emperor, Zytun the Second, and nephew to Sycolthor the Grand. During the *Dragonhold*, he stole Dracovomica from his uncle and, during the course of many adventures, called the Quest of Dracovomica, he made enemies with Zyxrxzy

the Ebon Rage and killed the mighty Morganshium Maximuth. During the Age of Despair, he became trapped in the cavern of the Unholy Pools shortly after he and the other Sacred became immortal therein. Although no one knows what he did during his entrapment, Seeroth emerged from the cavern with a secret agenda. Seeroth became the defacto leader of the Heroes of Noon during *The Darkhold* and he is credited with killing T'Oth Maldran. After *The Darkhold*, Seeroth disappeared although there are many, namely Seekers, who believe that he still lives and is engaged in clandestine activities. He is also called the Last Emperor of Vhendimmoth.

**Seven Empires, The:** Seven ancient civilizations, all sundered by the end of the Age of Darkness, which share a legacy in the pursuit of *The Godspell*. The Seven Empires (race) were (in order of appearance): Satrimmoth (dwarves), S'Grieyl (elves), Doblin (hobgoblins), D'Alicar (elves), Uruba (duruban), T'Alimar (elves), and Vhendimmoth (sapient). With the exception of Uruba, ruins of the Seven Empires are scattered throughout the Desolate South and the Great Kharsis Desert.

**Seven Oracles:** The Mind of God. One third of *The Godspell*. The Oracles represent the sentience and knowledge of the True God broken into seven parts. These Oracles desire to be reunited with both the Seven Spheres and the Seven Scrolls in order to reconstitute their prior existence. In destroying Its knowledge of Itself in order to allow Creation to survive without Its influence, the True God's suicide drove the Oracles mad. Each Oracle represents seven extreme aspects of the infinite perspectives of the True God. There is nothing the Oracles do not know, but there is always a price exacted for their utterly honest information. Powerful aulspawn guard each Oracle. The Seven Oracles are the Barthrax Oracle, the Eastwind Oracle, the Imperial Oracle, the Lost Oracle, the Oracle of Knowledge, Turmoil's Oracle, and the Unholy Oracle. Each Oracle must be used to activate the full power of either the corresponding Sphere or the corresponding Scroll.

**Seven Scrolls:** The Word of God. One third of *The Godspell*. Also referred to as The Great Mosaic. The Seven Scrolls represent the total control over the physical and spiritual elements of the Cosmos. Possession of all Seven Scrolls grants the owner complete control over Creation itself. The Seven Scrolls are The Master Scroll, the Scroll of Air, the Scroll of Death, the Scroll of Earth, the

Scroll of Fire, the Scroll of Life, and the Scroll of Water. Of the Three Parts of God (save the Master Sphere), the Seven Scrolls are subject to dismemberment, although not total destruction.

**Seven Spheres, the:** The Power of God. One third of *The Godspell*. The Seven Spheres represent the total power of the True God. Totally devoid of intellect or sentience, possession of one Sphere grants the owner complete power of a concept of humenity. The Seven Spheres are the Master Sphere, the Spheres of Immortality, the Mind, the Planes, Power, Reality, and Time. The Master Sphere is the only part of *The Godspell* that can be destroyed by casting it into the Unholy Pool of Oblivion. Doing so would end Creation.

**Six Swords of Satrimmoth, the:** Swords created during the final days of the Satrimmothian Empire. The creation of these relics may resulted in the destruction of Satrimmoth. The Six are Anarchist, Damnation, Disjuncter, Lawbringer, Magister, and Warmonger.

**Soulestra:** The most plentiful of the aulspawn races. The soulestra were a medley of different kinds of creatures. According to the *Cilidian*, the soulestra shared no common cause and as a result, despite their superior numbers, were easily vanquished by the saldrash during the *War of the Aulspawn*.

**Splitplate, Flindgold:** The greatest hero of Burquebain. Flindgold Splitplate was a lowly priest of Barthramus before he felt his god's calling during the *War of the Blue Mountain*. Flindgold accomplished many deeds during the *War of the Blue Mountain*, least of all defeating Mathborin II. He is credited with not only driving the Named One Euroclydon Stormchurner from Cliver, but also with blinding the dragon in one eye and maiming his right forepaw. A few centuries later, Flindgold would free his people from diabolical forces during the *Demon Wars* battling the Duke of Hell, Caarcrinolaas, sacrificing his life in the process.

**Swords of Tasler:** The remnants of one of Tasler the Radiant's shattered foreclaws, there are two Swords of Tasler, the Diamond Sword and the Onyx Sword. Both swords are potent weapons, particularly when paired with the jewel known as the Eye of Tasler. The Diamond Sword of Tasler is known for having been held by the Hero of Noon, Silverwood Vine. Interestingly, Silverwood's half-brother, Zyxrxzy the Ebon Rage, has owned and used the Onyx Sword of Tasler. The

current location of these two weapons is unknown.

**T'Alimar:** Sixth of the Seven Empires. T'Alimar was the first elven civilization founded after the *First Family War* destroyed D'Alicar and sundered S'Grieyl. Dominating the southern Eternal Forest, it was the elves of T'Alimar who consigned the elves of Z'Ythral to the Lands Below. T'Alimar was destroyed by *Uriyen's Summons*, the beginning of the *Demon Wars*. The survivors of T'Alimar founded Sal T'Alimar.

**Tasler Mori:** One of the direct offspring of Tasler the Radiant and Vhendimmoth. Tasler the Mori terrorized the Mandlite and Yahillian people during the Age of Humen. Tasler's terror lasted until the wizard, Mammun the Maker, challenged the dragon to a contest. Mammun tricked the Tasler into an unbreakable chain that the wizard then moved to the Endless Chasm at the foot of Sky's Eye Peak. There, Tasler Mori has been trapped ever since. According to the *Cilidian*, Tasler Mori will be released during the *Great Reckoning* to lay waste to the Noon Woods and surrounding lands. A powerful defender of law and goodness will defeat him.

**Tasler the Radiant:** Also called the King of Dragons. The father of Drm's dragons, Tasler sought to possess the Seven Spheres in order to prevent the casting of *The Godspell*, but the saldrash formed a unified front to oppose him. Later, the goddess Thore Mire gave her mortal champion, Fortens the Founder, the means to destroy Tasler: Dracovomica. In a titanic battle, Tasler the Radiant was slain by Fortens, although with his dying breath, he killed Fortens when Dracovomica failed the Founder of Vhendimmoth.

**Twilight Forest, The:** The Twilight Forest is a strange location within the Noon Woods that seems to be a sort of prison for particularly powerful evils. Dark, fey creatures prowl the never-ending twilight of the forest. Herein is the path to Tasler Mori's Prison beneath the Endless Chasm, the Grey Catacombs of Evelyn the Grey, and the home of the powerful Fairy Queen, ruler of Noon Woods.

**Unholy Pools, the:** The Saldrash's attempt to create *The Godspell* with their own power during the Dawn Before the Dawn. There are six Pools in all. Sentient, the Pools have distinct personalities, but all share tremendous power and all want to see *The Godspell* destroyed as they recognize that they are the flawed duplicates of same. Powerful

creatures, usually aulspawn, have always guarded the Pools. The Unholy Pools are the Pools of Ascension, Fate, Immortality, Mystery, Oblivion, and the Planes. The Unholy Pools are hidden in the Noon Woods.

**Uriyens the Green:** One of the best-known elven wizards, Uriyens was a king of the T'Alimar Elves. A powerful wizard, he was also naïve. T'Oth Maldran tricked him into initiating the *Demon Wars* when he cast the infamous *Uriyens' Summons*. Uriyens was the father of Zyxrxzy the Ebon Rage and Silverwood Vine.

**Uruba:** Fourth of the Seven Empires. Composed of duruban. The Uruba Empire stretched across the Golden Plains and into Worm's Wood during the Age of Human and the Age of Greatness. Uruba sought nothing less than total domination of Drm and saw all non-duruban as threats to their hegemony. Uruba contested the growing might of Vhendimmoth throughout the Age of Greatness but in the end lost the contest as they were fighting numerous battles not only against Vhendimmoth but against Yahilli and the B'Ain and A'Grabath elves. The Uruba Empire fell in 1801 in the Age of Greatness during the Sacking of Grrelldast, the last significant battle of the *Second War of the Wynding River*. The legacy of Uruba lived on further north with the Curoborian Empire.

**Valdeze:** The City of the Falcon. The most influential nation Under the Crown, Valdeze lies in the northern portions of the Wynding River Valley. Formed during 1066 AG, Valdeze is a young nation that has nevertheless had a profound impact on Drm. A staunch member of the Ministry, Valdeze is one of the few nations composed by representatives of its citizens; called the Justices, these men direct Valdeze's society. Valdeze was the center of the Forces of Noon during *The Darkhold*. Valdeze is at enmity with the Kingdom of Eselix and the Wyrmspine Hills. The legendary Valernus Library is located in Valdeze.

**Vhendimmoth:** The Seventh and last of the Seven Empires. Composed of sapiens. Often called the Great Empire. At its pinnacle, the Vhendimmothian Empire's power stretched across the south of Drm and into the center of the Lands Under the Crown. According to legend, Vhendimmoth was named after the dragon Vhendimmoth who was killed by a king of a tribe of Sapiens named Fortens. Vhendimmoth's death enraged her mate, Tasler the Radiant, who called all his children to destroy the Sapiens of Forten's tribe,

beginning the *War of the Wyrms*. Guided by the goddess Thore Mire, Fortens would seek out and find Dracovomica which he used to defeat the dragons and to kill Tasler, although he too died. On the very ground upon which Fortens the Founder passed into death Tortens, his brother, built Forten's Keep, the foundation of Vhendimmoth. Vhendimmoth was the most important of the Seven Empires and, aside from Satrimmoth, the most advanced. Advances in technology, science, culture, and The Word emerged from Vhendimmoth throughout the centuries. Numerous legends and personalities emerged from Vhendimmoth. The *Cilidian* prophesied that the Keeper of the Seven would hail from Vhendimmoth. This legend, coupled with the intrusion of T'Oth Maldran, led the best known of Vhendimmoth's Emperors, Sycolthor the Grand, to instigate the *Dragonhold*. Sycolthor hoped to absorb the souls of those pledged to him as they were killed by flights of dragons, allowing him to cast *ascension*, magic Forbidden in Drm. When his ploy backfired, rather than admit defeat and flee Forten's Keep, Sycolthor cast a powerful *devastation*, which not only killed most of the continent-realm's dragons, but decimated Forten's Keep and its people. Thus fell Vhendimmoth, the last and longest lived of the Seven Empires.

**Vine, Silverwood:** One of the Heroes of Noon. Silverwood Vine is one of the sons of the elven king Uriyens the Green; Silverwood's mother was sapien. Although Uriyens died shortly after Silverwood was born, his mother raised Silverwood in the northern reaches of Eternal Forest as a warrior. Most of Silverwood's tribe was killed sometime during the Age of Glory by Zyxrxzy the Ebon Rage, Silverwood's half-brother. Silverwood swore he would avenge the death of his mother and people. Over the course of many decades, the half-elf undertook many wondrous and perilous adventures and acquired the famed Diamond Sword of Tasler. He would join up with the Heroes of Noon for glory and the chance to accomplish his goal to kill Zyxrxzy, whom he discovered was one of T'Oth Maldran's chief servants. Silverwood perished fighting his half-brother during the *Siege of Mount Oblivon of The Darkhold*, although he still accomplished his oath and slew Zyxrxzy. Silverwood's body and the Diamond Sword of Tasler were laid to rest in the Deep Sea, but it is said that during the *Great Reckoning* the Diamond Sword of Tasler and the soul of Silverwood will return to uphold the cause of light.

**Worm's Wood:** A large forest east of the Deep Sea south of Wyrmspine Hills. Worm's Wood was

once dominated by green dragons and other powerful beings and eventually came under the control of Curoboria. Eventually, the duruban were driven out by elves and sapiens. Worm's Wood is dominated by Eselix, the Worm's Tooth Towns, and numerous ruins and sacred sites. Both *Claimed Land Wars* took place in Worm's Wood.

**Zalphan the Bard:** A half-elf of Ashturian and K'Rystas descent. Zalphan was known for his travels and the journals he kept that recorded his exploits. Zalphan disappeared in 190 in the Golden Age during the *Second Deep Sea War* fighting the death knight called The Blackiron.

**Zar:** One of the saldrash races, the zar were the most powerful Drmian entities after the dragons. Little else is known about them aside from their enmity with the saldrash and their desire to destroy all existence. They were evil, decadent, and banished to a terrible place of never-ending death by the saldrash.

**Zyxrxzy the Ebon Rage:** A terrible enemy to justice and law, wielder of the Onyx Sword of Tasler, and the creator of the darkmorphs, Zyxrxzy the Ebon Rage was an agent of evil for over 5000 years. The son of Uriyens the Green and a balor demon, Zyxrxzy met his hated foe, Seeroth the Dark during the *Dragonhold* and played a part in the deaths of some of Seeroth's allies. He later became the horrific warlord of the Halls of Screaming Blood and razed the lands of elves and sapiens alike. During the Age of Glory, Zyxrxzy unwittingly killing the mother of his half-brother, Silverwood Vine, thereby earning the latter's undying enmity. He was tapped by T'Oth Maldran and became the demi-lich's chief lieutenant during *The Darkhold*. During the *Siege of Mount Oblivon*, he and Silverwood engaged in a climactic battle. Silverwood would have won the battle had he not sacrificed his opportunity to save his ally, Silzen Silverhaired. Although Silverwood was mortally wounded, he still dealt Zyxrxzy a deathblow. Instead of simply dying, Zyxrxzy and his darkmorphs imploded, leaving nothing more than his legendary Helm of Dread, which Silzen threw into the Deep Sea where it was lost.



## Part VII: Monsters of Dm

What follows are some creatures unique to the continent-realm of Dm. The continent-realm is both a place of wonder and enlightenment, and mystery and danger. These are but a few of the creatures that a seeker in Dm may encounter.

### ADRAEDEN

#### Medium-Sized Undead

Hit Dice:	9d12 (58 hp)
Initiative:	+9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	50 ft.
AC:	20 (+5 Dex, +5 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple:	+4/+8
Attack:	Claws +9 melee (1d6+4 and disease)
Full Attack:	2 claws +9 melee (1d6+4 and disease) and 1 bite +3 melee (1d8+2 and disease)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Disease, nauseate
Special Qualities:	Damage reduction 10/silver, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +3 turn resistance, wheeze
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +6
Abilities:	Str 18, Dex 20, Con -, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 18
Skills:	Climb +8, Intimidate +16, Jump +8, Listen +16, Move Silently +11, Search +6, Spot +16, Survival +0 (+2 when following tracks)
Feats:	Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Finesse (claws)
Environment:	Any land and underground
Organization:	Solitary, gang (2-4), or pack (7-12)
Challenge Rating:	8
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always Neutral Evil
Advancement:	10 – 18 HD (Medium)

*You spy the humanoid shape huddled near the sick-house's backdoor. There is no doubt that it is not human... at least not any more. You can see and smell the rotting flesh that flakes from the bones and filthy remains of clothing. Its body is covered in sores and tumors, and it wheezes and coughs incessantly, black phlegm oozing from its gaping, sharp-toothed maw. Suddenly, the creature looks up and rises. Baleful, yellow eyes stare*

*at you as it moves forward with startling speed, its jagged-nailed, skeletal hands reaching for your throat.*

Adraeden are foul and powerful undead, spreaders of disease and decay, and the preferred supernatural servants of wastes, the clerics of Khmund. They are often found in areas ravaged by disease and are usually created from the remains of those killed by contagions; only adraeden of humanoid origins have been encountered. Wastes often unleash these creatures on unsuspecting populations to sow fear and cull veneration for their dread master.

Adraeden are warped and completely evil; they exist to spread disease to the living. More than self-aware enough to know and understand what has happened to them, adraeden are filled with hate for their masters that is only surpassed by their hate for those still alive and disease free. They rarely kill those upon which they prey, preferring that victims slowly rot away after feeling their foul touch. Adraeden are usually found singularly but occasionally they travel in small gangs or packs; the larger the gathering of adraeden, the greater the chance that a waste is behind their activities. Thankfully, adraeden do not have the ability to create spawn.

Adraeden may be created with the *create greater undead* spell by a 12<sup>th</sup> level caster.

#### Combat

Adraeden rarely attempt to surprise foes, realizing that their constant coughing is a detriment to such a strategy. These undead typically chase down their foes and brutally injure them in order to infecting them. Usually, they depart afterward, allowing the victim to slowly rot from their wounds and sickness.

**Disease (Ex):** Any successful adraeden melee attack risks afflicting the victim with a disease known as *dread wasting* if a Fortitude save DC 18 is failed (incubation period immediate, damage 1d4 Constitution, 1d4 Strength). Unlike most diseases, *dread wasting* affects the victim immediately, but then seems to go into remission after 1d8 rounds. However, the victim must make another saving throw one day later or else continue to suffer from the disease, suffering an additional

1d4 to Constitution and Strength; this damage is cumulative each day (2d4 on the third day, 3d4 on the fourth day, and so on). *Dread wasting* is notoriously difficult to detect as there are no symptoms beyond those of a common cold. *Dread wasting* may be overcome by both *remove curse* and *remove disease* or a single *heal* spell.

A victim that dies from dread wasting is difficult to return to life. Attempts to return life require that the caster succeed in a caster level check DC 10 + the adraeden's HD. Failure prevents the caster from any further attempts through any means to return life to a disease victim until he gains an additional caster level..

The save DC is Charisma based.

**Nauseate (Ex):** The stench of an adraeden is so potent that all beings with fewer hit dice than the creature must succeed a Will save DC 18 or be nauseated for 1d4 rounds. Once a save is successful, a victim is immune to the adraeden's stench for 24 hours.

**Skills:** Adraeden have a +8 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

**Wheeze (Ex):** An adraeden is always coughing and wheezing. Those within 60 feet of an adraeden will likely hear it, receiving a +8 bonus to Listen and Spot checks.

## CHIRPTO

1<sup>st</sup> – Level Warrior

Medium-Sized Humanoid (Chirpto)

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	1d8+2 (6 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+1 (+1 Dex)
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
<b>AC:</b>	13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather armor)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+1/+2
<b>Attack:</b>	Slasher +3 melee (1d6+1) (from the sky only); or wing-bracer +2 melee (1d6+1/x3) (on the ground only)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Slasher +3 melee (1d6+1) (from the sky only); or wing-bracer +2 melee (1d6+1/x3) (on the ground only)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft. /5 ft. (10 ft. with wings)
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Chirpto Traits
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -2
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 7, Cha 6
<b>Skills:</b>	Hide +1 (+3 while flying), Intimidate +1, Jump +4, Listen +2, Move Silently +1 (+3 while flying), Perform +1, Spot +1, Survival +1
<b>Feats:</b>	Blind-Fight <sup>B</sup> , Flyby Attack <sup>B</sup> ,

**Environment:**

**Organization:**

**Challenge Rating:**

**Treasure:**

**Alignment:**

**Advancement:**

**ECL:**

Weapon Focus (slasher)

Mountains and hills

(subterranean)

Solitary or swarm (1d4 + 1)

2

Standard

Usually Chaotic Neutral

By character class

+3

*Initially, you mistake the figure flying above you as a giant bat; however, you swiftly realize that the creature combines the features of both a flying mammal and a humanoid. The long arms are dominated by a wide membrane for wings and the head sports large, triangular ears. The creature's black-furred body is covered in likewise dark, coarse clothes. It observes you with a bizarre mixture of amusement and caution with small, yellow eyes.*

The first Humen created by the legendary saldrash, the chirpto are the most bizarre of the seven Humen races.

Chirpto are tall, slender Humen with large, bat-like wings in place of arms. Chirpto typically stand just less than seven feet and, although they appear much heavier, both males and females rarely weigh more than 150 pounds. They are covered in heat-storing, velvety fur that tends to range from golden browns, to midnight blues, and rich black in color. The skin beneath the fur is rubbery, coarse, and brown in color. Their eyes are relatively small and appear pupilless; in truth, the pupils are protected by reflective, yellow membranes to protect the eyes during flight. Alongside their wings, one of the most distinctive aspects of chirpto physiology are their ears that are extremely large and wide, similar to those of the bats they so strongly resemble. Their noses are small and upturned and typically pink. Although their teeth resemble those of most Humen, the canines are long and extremely sharp. They have large breasts and powerful shoulders to facilitate their flying; their arms are extremely long, allowing them tremendous reach for their size. Chirpto have three fingered, extremely long, dexterous hands, two fingers and one thumb. The remaining two fingers, the ring and small, are elongated and support the bat-like wings that sprout from chirpto's sides. Although it appears easily damaged, the wing-membrane is very leathery and strong.

Both males and females tend to go about bare-chested but wear long, tight-fitted kilts and elabo-

rate sandals. Headgear to extenuate the ears is not uncommon and females tend to have long manes of hair at the center of their heads that trail to the base of the neck.

Chirpto speak Chirpto and tend to be fluent in Dwarven. A few may know Common or Hobgoblin. Chirpto are known for their silent and extremely curious behavior; they also have fantastic imaginations and the strange art known as *theatre* is their creation. Outside of this gift to society-at-large, chirpto tend to borrow and steal from other peoples.

Most chirpto encountered beyond the mountains of Burquebain are warriors. The statistics above represent a 1<sup>st</sup> level warrior.

### Combat

Chirpto prefer to do battle in the air, swooping down to strike their adversaries before taking to the air again to regroup. They prefer to attack at night and will go out of their way to avoid fighting in subterranean environments with terrestrial creatures. They are not known for well-planned tactics or strategies, preferring to overwhelm their foes and cause as much damage as swiftly as possible. They are especially adept at sneaking up on foes and there are a fair number of sorcerers among their number that use magic to great advantage from the sky.

**Chirpto Traits (Ex):** Chirpto possess the following traits

- Chirpto are as graceful on the ground as they are in the air, receiving a +2 racial bonus to Dexterity.
- Chirpto possess great endurance, aiding them in flight, granting them a +2 racial bonus to Constitution.
- Chirpto are controlled by their emotions more than intellect, earning them a -2 racial penalty to Wisdom.
- Due to their unusual appearance and behavior, Chirpto suffer a -2 racial penalty to Charisma.
- Medium-sized. Chirpto receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- A chirpto's base land speed is 30 feet. Chirpto also fly at 60 feet with average maneuverability.

- Chirpto suffer a -4 racial penalty with all weapons not designed specifically for their race unless they take the Exotic Weapon Proficiency for a specific weapon.
- Chirpto receive a +2 racial bonus to Listen, Perform, Spot, Survival checks.
- While flying, Chirpto receive a +2 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks.
- Chirpto possess a natural radar that grants them blind-sight.
- Chirpto gain Fly-by Attack as a bonus feat.
- Chirpto possess 60 foot darkvision.
- Chirpto are especially susceptible to sonic attacks, suffering a -2 penalty to all saves associated with sound.
- Due to their wingspan, Chirpto may not fly in enclosed spaces. Chirpto require double their reach, or 20 feet, worth of space to fly effectively. Those without this space fly at half speed and with poor maneuverability. Those with ten feet or less cannot fly at all.
- Automatic Languages: Common, Chirpto, and Dwarven.
- Favored Class: Rogue

The chirpto warrior presented here had the following ability scores before racial adjustments: Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

### Chirpto Society

Chirpto value freedom. Individual freedom is far more important to a chirpto than anything else, even family or life, and millions have died in pursuit of this freedom since the Age of Mist. Chirpto have little recognition or understanding of the desires or wants of others. This has brought them into conflict with other races – particularly dwarves – and each other. Most Chirpto civilizations crumble from civil war within two years. The few that have survived, like Irprethe, exist in almost complete anarchy so long as people are generally safe and the rulers retain the greatest degree of authority.

Chirpto tend to live in huge caves in large mountains. The majority of chirpto live in the

Crown of Burquebain in northern Drm, although there are settlements in the Chain of Burquebain. Most cities occupied by chirpto are noisy and extremely disorganized; most cities not found in caves were built by other races, usually dwarves, elves, or hobgoblins. The few cities built by chirpto are a hodge-podge of designs, although many who witness the upside-down city of Irprethe are awed by what they see. Bats are constant companions to chirpto and it is not unusual for chirpto to ride giant Burquebainian bats or sinisters. Fully 35% of any chirpto civilization is composed of non-combatants (mostly children). Male and female chirpto are equal in every way.

Chirpto live as long as healthy Sapiens, 65 years or so. They are very emotional creatures, given to sudden fits of passion, sadness, and happiness; they tend to expect immediate gratification. During this lifespan, chirpto pour a lot of energy into expressing themselves. As a race, chirpto are dedicated to the arts and other forms of expression. Their race is the one credited with the concept of the Theatre and many strange instruments made from the metal brass, like the longblower, and the sadblower. Chirpto use the Dwarven alphabet and are prolific writers. However, like elves, chirpto take liberties with truth and often subjectify what they write. As a result, chirpto history is a messy amalgamation of exaggerations, myths, and outright lies and no two histories ever entirely agree.

Chirpto are considered sinister by other races. In truth, it is better to say that chirpto are curious to the point of being intrusive. Although their cities tend to be loud and chaotic, chirpto are very capable of being silent. They are natural-born observers and it is not unusual for chirpto to hang upside-down in trees over travelers in the wild, listening and learning. Those who spot the chirpto usually think they are being spied upon for some fell deed when, in actuality, the chirpto is simply sating her curiosity.

The chief chirpto deity is Churarbus of the Aldra Pantheon.

## **CROWNED RAM**

**Large Magical Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 6d10 + 18 (51 hp)  
**Initiative:** +6 (+2 Dex +4 Improved Initiative)  
**Speed:** 40 ft., climb 20 ft.  
**AC:** 15 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)  
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/+17

**Attack:** Butt +13 melee (1d8+7)  
**Full Attack:** Butt +13melee (1d8+7) and 2 hooves +5 melee (1d4+3)  
**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.  
**Special Attacks:** Rending gore, superior bull rush, trample 2d6+10  
**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, resistance to cold 20, steel will, scent  
**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +8  
**Abilities:** Str 24, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 2  
**Skills:** Climb +16, Jump +9, Listen +11, Spot +11  
**Feats:** Improved Bull Rush<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (butt)  
**Environment:** Cold mountains and hills  
**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or herd (6-30)  
**Challenge Rating:** 6  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Always Neutral  
**Advancement:** 6 – 12 HD (Large); 13 – 18 HD (Huge)

*Appearing on the craggy ridge above you is a ram-like creature. Almost as tall as a man at the shoulders and twice as long, the beast is covered in heavy, violet and white fur. The creature's long head sports beady, black eyes that nevertheless seem to scowl at you. The creature abruptly lowers its head, displaying very sharp, gold horns structured in a manner than resembles a crown. With an angry snort, it charges!*

There are few creatures as cantankerous as crowned rams. These large herbivores appear to be a mix between mountain goats, with whom they share an affinity for mountains and rock climbing; and the buffalo that shares their grumpy temperament.

Most people not native to Burquebain quickly know to leave crowned rams alone when they are encountered; only the extremely brave or the extremely foolish ever attempt to kill one for food or sport. However, dwarves have managed to domesticate hundreds of these creatures for their cavalry. There are few sights in Drm more threatening than witnessing a Charge of the Crown during which hundreds of crowned ram-riding dwarves charge into battle.

## **Combat**

In the wild, a crowned ram is prone to charge any creature perceived as a threat... which is usually any creature of humanoid or greater size. Females are far more aggressive than males, often killing trespassers if they feel their young are

threatened. Creatures of the cold mountain passes, crowned rams have tough hides to protect them from the cold and from predators, of which the rams have few.

**Rending Gore (Ex):** Against a prone victim, the crowned ram may attempt a rending gore. The crowned ram can accomplish this immediately after a successful Superior Bull Rush that succeeds in knocking a defender prone or else as a standard action. In either case, the ram need only a successful touch attack to horribly maul the victim, dealing 2d8+10 points of damage on a successful hit. The victim does receive a Reflex save DC 20 to avoid an especially nasty gore; failure results in the victim suffering an additional 1 point of bleeding damage for the next 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Superior Bull Rush (Ex):** A crowned ram that hits with a charging butt attack can attempt to Bull Rush the opponent as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. Unlike a normal Bull Rush, the crowned ram's Superior Bull Rush does not have to continue to push the defender backwards, although the defender will continue to stumble back the total distance (5 feet + 1 foot per point by which the ram exceeded the defender's check result). If the ram's Rush exceeded the defender's check by 10 points or more, the defender is knocked prone. A crowned ram receives the Improved Bull Rush feat as a bonus feat.

**Steel Will (Ex):** Crowned rams have a +4 racial bonus on Will saves.

**Trample (Ex):** Reflex half DC 20. The save DC is Strength-based.

## **DREAM KIN**

The goddess Churabus is the power that represents all facets of darkness and night. Whether the beneficent dreams of inspiration, the apparently meaningless visions in the night, or terrorizing nightmares, Churabus supports and defends the slumbering masses. The Lady of Night also strives to ensure that the possibilities or impossibilities of the Land of Dreams do not hemorrhage and invade into the Mortal Coil of Midlorr. To ensure that she achieves her responsibilities, the Night Walker is served by the dream kin, extraplanar outsiders from the Ever-Changing Chaos of Limbo.

Dream kin are among the least known outsid-

ers in the Realms Beyond. Creatures of whimsy and change, they have long since expanded beyond the original role their mistress set for them: the collection of dream energy. Overtime, different varieties of dream kin have come into existence. While most dream kin continue to serve Churabus, many have long since abandoned the Goddess of Night in favor of their own goals. There are rumors that some have grown so powerful that they come close to rivaling their lady in power. What, if anything, Churabus intends on doing with these prodigal children is unclear.

To date, the best known dream kin are the night blight, crave, dreamstalker, and vagary. While nights blights are rarely more than mischievous pests, crave are fueled with a need to provide others what they want... even if it's not in another's best interests. Dreamstalkers can threaten small communities with their lust for dream energy while the incredibly potent vagary can make a person's dreams, or nightmares, come true.

**Dream Kin Traits:** All dream kin possess the following traits (unless otherwise noted in a creature's entry).

- Immunity to cold and poison
- Resistance to acid 10 and sonic 10
- See in Darkness (Ex): All dream kin can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by a *deeper darkness* spell.
- All dream kin are immune to spells from the school of enchantment, petrification/paralysis or any attempt to impede their movement, and *polymorph* spells.
- Telepathy 100 feet
- Dream kin can communicate in any language known by the being whose body it inhabits.

## **CRAVE**

**Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Dream-Kin)**

**Hit Dice:** 7d8+14 (45 hp)  
**Initiative:** +4 (+4 Dex)  
**Speed:** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)  
**AC:** 24 (+4 Dexterity, +10 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 20

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +7/+8

<b>Attack:</b>	Claw +8 (1d4+1)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 claws +8 (1d4+1) and 1 bite + (1d6+1)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Fancy, Itch, spell-like abilities, <i>summon dream kin</i> , supplicate
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Damage reduction 10/lawful, immunity to cold and poison, immunity to enchantments, paralysis, petrification, or <i>polymorph</i> , resistance to acid 10 and sonic 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 20, telepathy
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +4
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 13, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 20
<b>Skills:</b>	Diplomacy +15, Escape Artist +14, Gather Information +17, Hide +16, Intimidate +15, Listen +9, Move Silently +16, Perform (sing)+15, Search +12, Survival -1 (+1 when following tracks), Use Rope +4 (+6 with bindings)
<b>Feats:</b>	Dodge, Investigator, Stealthy
<b>Environment:</b>	The Ever-Changing Chaos of Limbo or the Land of Dreams
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary or pack (2-12)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	5
<b>Treasure:</b>	Standard
<b>Alignment:</b>	Always Chaotic Neutral
<b>Advancement:</b>	8 – 14 HD (Medium), 15 – 21 HD (Large)

*The source of the lovely, yet simultaneously haunting, melody hovers above the drunken, engorged ducal court. The creature looks at you with a beautiful face, its large eyes dominated by black pupils, its singing mouth full of bright, white teeth. However, the beatific face is in stark contrast to the creature's shadowy, emaciated form. The creature beckons you with long, skeletal fingers, inviting you to partake in the opportunities before you. You find it difficult to resist the call of the creature's melodious voice...*

Craves are among the more dangerous of the lesser dream-kin not due to their desire to harm, but due to their desire to see others acquire their hearts' wants. Craves, like their name implies, are overwhelmed with the need to see others happy even if said happiness is destructive and dangerous. To a crave, the concept, "Too much of a good thing," has no meaning. Craves seek to undo the boundaries under which mortals limit themselves, therefore making dreams come true...even if the dreams will not result in a happy ending. Craves themselves are incapable of recognizing the pain their actions bring and viciously fight those who would attempt to limit their at-

tempts to deliver dreams to others.

It is believed that craves were not created directly by Churabus but are some kind of detritus of the dream-stuff collected by dreamstalkers and other dream-kin. Other scholars counter that craves were actually the original concept created by the Night Walker and that they may have been tampered with by a god or cosmic entity of benevolence.

## Combat

A crave is an eager combatant when confronted by those seeking to constrain dreams. Although it has a variety of options at its disposal, a crave will often begin combat with its supplicate, hoping to release others from their restraints with fancy the next round. A crave will always cause those that seek to do it harm to itch as soon as they enter melee range. A crave is not afraid to fight until it is near defeat.

**Fancy (Su):** A crave may call out to the fancies of those who have constrained their desires, singing to them in such a way to unlock targets' resistances. Fancy is similar to a *suggestion* spell cast at 10<sup>th</sup> level with a few exceptions. Fancy targets all within a 60 foot radius of the crave, requiring that all in the area of effect succeed in a Will save DC 18 to overcome the effects. Failure indicates that the crave has successfully unlocked a victim's desire. Unless the crave has had the opportunity to determine specific desires for those affected by fancy, it will usually encourage targets to pursue generic wants, like greater wealth, food, drink, or romantic interactions. If a crave knows of a specific fancy for targets, the save DC increases to 20. Crave rarely intended to harm with fancy, although it is perfectly capable of using its power in such a fashion. The crave must speak a language of those it targets. Fancy is a mind-affecting compulsion. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Itch (Su):** A crave may cause victims to feel the itch of a desire or perceived need, causing distraction and irritability until the need is fulfilled. As a free action, a crave may exude its itch to all within 5 feet of its person. Those that fail the Will save DC 18 suffer a -2 penalty to all attack actions, saving throws, and skill checks. Itch persists for 7 rounds; if after the duration a previously affected creature reenters the crave's area of effect, he will be required to make another save or suffer the effects again. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same crave's itch

for 24 hours. Other dream kin are immune to itch. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Spell-like Abilities:** At will – *detect law, detect thoughts, greater teleport, invisibility, sleep*; 1/day – *confusion, suggestion*. Caster level 10<sup>th</sup>. DC 15 + spell level.

**Summon dream-kin (Sp):** Once per day a crave can attempt to summon 2d8 night blights with a 40% chance of success, or another crave with a 30% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell.

**Supplicate (Su):** A crave believes that what it is doing is for the benefit of those it targets. As a result, it cannot understand how anyone could intend it or those it is trying to help harm. Once a day, a crave can sing a supplication to those that would stop it from helping those in need, affecting all within 10 feet as though by a *charm person* spell cast at 10<sup>th</sup> level if a Will save DC 18 is failed. Those to whom the crave successfully supplicates consider the crave their ally and will not resist fancy attempts (although they are under no compulsion to otherwise do as the crave suggests). A crave does not need to speak the language of those it targets for supplicate. Supplicate is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

## DREAMSTALKER

**Large Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Dream-Kin)**

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	11d8+55 (104 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft., fly 90 ft. (perfect)
<b>AC:</b>	25 (-1 size, +13 natural, +3 (Dexterity), touch 12, flat-footed 22)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+9/+15
<b>Attack:</b>	Claw +13 (1d6+2)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 claws +13 (1d6+2) and 2 wings +8 (1d8+2)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft./10 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Aura of slumber, dream merge, dream wrack, soul leach, spell-like abilities, <i>summon dream kin</i>
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Damage reduction 10/cold iron and lawful, dream being, immunity to cold and poison, immunity to enchantments, paralysis, petrification, or <i>polymorph</i> , resistance to acid 10 and sonic 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 26, telepathy
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +6
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 14, Dex 17, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 8, Cha 24

<b>Skills:</b>	Bluff +21, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +21 (+23 when acting in character), Escape Artist +17, Hide +23, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (any one) +16, Listen +13, Move Silently +27, Perform (act) +21, Spot +13, Use Rope +3 (+5 with bindings)
<b>Feats:</b>	Improved Initiative, Dodge, Persuasive, Stealthy
<b>Environment:</b>	The Ever-Changing Chaos of Limbo or the Land of Dreams
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	11
<b>Treasure:</b>	Standard
<b>Alignment:</b>	Always Chaotic Neutral
<b>Advancement:</b>	12 – 22 HD (Large), 23 – 33 HD (Huge)

*You can barely discern the vaguely humanoid shape from the shadows of the room as it descends from the ceiling over the sleeping form of the young prince. Its dark violet form is composed of amorphous wisps of mist and the long, oval face is featureless. Bat-like wings from its back and where its legs should be extend into the surrounding darkness as it settles beside the bed, slender arms reaching for the boy's body. Without warning, it turns towards you and regards you silently, raising its long, tendril-like fingers over the prince threateningly...*

The silent dreamstalkers are mysterious denizens of Limbo. Most scholars believe that dreamstalkers collect the dreams, whether pleasant or nightmarish, from all Drmian humen; precisely what dreamstalkers do with these dreams once taken is unknown. Some believe they devour the dreams to prevent them from turning into possibilities in the Land of Dreams to may affect Drm; others believe that they live within the dreams as they lust after humen experiences. Whatever they do, most dreamstalkers carry out the will of Churabus, goddess of Night and the Lady of Loss. Dreamstalkers may also be found in the Land of Dreams. However, there are occasions during which a dreamstalker is *summoned* to the Mortal Coil of Drm; in such cases, dreamstalkers take advantage of the direct access they have to the dreams of mortals, growing in strength as they feast on the dreams. Usually, a dreamstalker's presence goes relatively unnoticed, those subject to their attentions suffering sleepiness or benefiting from increased inspiration. However, there have been cases during which a single dreamstalker will ravage entire families as they feast on dreams, fears, and aspirations, eventually driving their victims mad. A few have even gone as far as

to possess the bodies of their dead victims for a time, entranced in living mortal lives.

Dreamstalkers rarely speak when in their own forms, preferring to pantomime their actions. When inhabiting other creatures, dreamstalkers usually use the possessed creature's voice although in such cases the voice sounds strangely augmented and slurred.

Although there are suggestions that dreamstalkers are incorporeal, they only become so when they possess the body of another or enter one's dreams. In such cases, they can be directly attacked by entering the Land of Dreams.

## Combat

Dreamstalkers can be difficult combatants. Most dreamstalkers will immediately seek to dream merge with one of its adversaries or else a bystander before using its abilities and special attacks. They have no qualms about using those they possess as shields, although they rarely go out of their way to see their victims killed. If it proves necessary, a dreamstalker will not hesitate to retreat. Most do not bother seeking vengeance against their aggressors, finding it more worth their time to find new hosts. A dreamstalker's natural weapons, as well as any weapon it wields, are treated as chaotic-aligned and magical for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

**Aura of Slumber (Su):** A dreamstalker emanates a 10 foot aura that causes disorientation. Any creature within the aura must succeed a Will save DC 22 to resist. Failure results in the victim being overcome with fatigue, falling to the ground unconscious for one round per the dreamstalker's HD. A successful save imposes a -2 penalty on all actions while one remains within the aura's radius. A creature that has successfully resisted aura of slumber cannot be affected by it for the next 24 hours. A dreamstalker may continue or discontinue its aura as a free action. Aura of slumber is a mind-affecting, compulsion effect. The save DC is Charisma based.

**Dream Being (Sp):** A dreamstalker is always under an effect similar to a *greater invisibility* at 11<sup>th</sup> level caster level. Although this can be dispelled, a dreamstalker can return to this state as a free action on its turn.

As it exists as a creature of dreams, the dreamstalker ignores all materials other than cold iron or silver. It may pass through such objects or cause such objects to pass through its form as

though it were an incorporeal creature (regardless of any enhancement bonus). Cold iron or silver affect a dreamstalker as per normal.

**Dream Merge (Su):** Dreamstalkers may attempt to possess the body of a mortal as a standard action once per day. This effect is similar to *magic jar* as a 20<sup>th</sup> level caster with the follow exceptions. First, a dreamstalker's dream merge only be staved off by a *protection from chaos* or *magic circle against chaos* spell. Second, if a body is slain while possessed, the dreamstalker is under no compulsion to leave. The assault succeeds if the victim fails a Will save DC 22; sleeping victims suffer a -2 penalty to saves against dream merge. A creature that saves is immune to a dreamstalker's merge for the next 24 hours. The dreamstalker may remain in a possessed body as long as it likes. Dreamstalkers may only possess giant, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid creatures.

A dreamstalker typically possesses the body while it is at rest (mediation, sleep, etc.); the victim suffers limited ill-effect. When possessing a sleeping host, a dreamstalker consumes 2 points of Wisdom over an eight hour period. If the dreamstalker departs after this time, it regains any lost hit points, regenerates any lost limbs, and is freed of all baneful, unwanted effects. The dreamstalker's presence creates intense, euphoric dreams for the host. Although the host wakes fatigued, he receives a +2 luck bonus on Skill checks for the next eight hours. The victim wakes up fatigued and will regain its lost Wisdom after eight hours of restful sleep.

If a dreamstalker elects to possess a conscious victim, the victim feels as though he is about to fall asleep and his mind is filled with dream-like visions. Conscious victims receive a Will save DC 22 every 1d4 rounds to avoid 1 point of Wisdom damage. Damage in excess of more than half one's total Wisdom results in insanity (through some twist, a dreamstalker does not benefit from insane humanoids, so the spirit only seeks to cause insanity on those that pose a threat). Being possessed by a dreamstalker while conscious does not bring any benefit.

In either case, it is possible for a dreamstalker to continue its possession even after a host reaches 0 Wisdom. Unlike the typical result of a 0 Wisdom (being reduced to a nightmare filled coma), the host's mind dies and the dreamstalker may continue to live in the body. Some dreamstalkers that value the experiences of living as mortals enjoy



these forays. Once a dreamstalker leaves a dead body, it cannot return.

A dreamstalker may be removed from a possessed body by a *dismissal*, *dispel chaos*, or a successful *greater dispel magic*.

**Dream Wrack (Su):** Dream wrack is a more virulent form of dream merge that allows a dreamstalker to attack the mind of the victim. The dreamstalker effectively becomes a *phantasmal killer* cast at 11<sup>th</sup> level and attacks the sleeping victim in his dreams in the form of the victim's fear. All damage taken by the victim is dealt with normally within the nightmare; if the victim is killed in his dreams, he wakes up. However, he loses 1d6 Wisdom points each time this occurs. When the victim loses half his Wisdom, he goes mad.

A dreamstalker may be removed from a possessed body by a *dismissal* or a successful *dispel chaos* or *dispel magic*.

**Soul Strike (Su):** A dreamstalker's melee attacks ignore most armor bonuses to AC. Magical enhancement bonuses to armor or shields continue to apply against dreamstalker attacks. Only armor or shields made from cold iron or silver provide full protection against a dreamstalker's melee attacks.

**Spell-like Abilities:** At will – *daze monster*, *deep slumber*, *detect law*, *detect thoughts*, *dispel law*, *dispel magic*, *gentle repose*, *greater teleport*, *hypnotism*, *magic circle against law*; 3/day – *chaos hammer*, *dream*, *nightmare*; 1/day – *eyebite*; *waves of exhaustion*. Caster level 11<sup>th</sup>, DC 17 + spell level.

**Summon dream-kin (Sp):** Once per day, a dreamstalker may attempt to summon a 1d6 craves with a 50% chance of success or 1d12 night blights with a 70% chance of success. This ability is equivalent to a 4<sup>th</sup> level spell.

**Skills:** A dreamstalker has a +8 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks.

## NIGHT BLIGHT

**Tiny Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Dream-Kin)**

**Hit Dice:** 2d8+4 (13 hp)  
**Initiative:** +4  
**Speed:** 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)  
**AC:** 20 (+4Dex, +4 natural,+2size), touch 16, flat-footed 16  
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/-6  
**Attack:** Claw +3 (1d2-1)  
**Full Attack:** 2 claw +2 (1d2-1)

**Space/Reach:** 2 ½ ft./2 ½ ft.  
**Special Attacks:** Blighter, spell-like abilities  
**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 5/lawful, immunity to cold and poison, immunity to enchantments, paralysis, petrification, or *polymorph*, resistance to acid 10 and sonic 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 17, telepathy  
**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +2  
**Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 15  
**Skills:** Bluff +7, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +2 (+4 when acting in character), Hide +25, Intimidate +9, Listen +4, Move Silently +17, Search +4, Spot +4, Survival -1 (+1 when tracking)  
**Feats:** Dodge, Lightning Reflexes  
**Environment:** The Ever-Changing Chaos of Limbo or the Land of Dreams  
**Organization:** Solitary, pair, pack (2d6), or swarm (4d6)  
**Challenge Rating:** 1  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Always Chaotic Neutral  
**Advancement:** 3 – 4 HD (Small)

*The little creatures are everywhere. They share few features in common, namely large eyes, fluttering wings, dark coloration, and toothy mouths that dominate their huge heads. Otherwise, some sport small horns, while others possess giant noses. Some are little more than cotton balls with appendages, while others resemble contorted dragon-like creatures. All titter and giggle annoying as they swarm around, their teeth gnashing loudly as they come closer and closer...*

Night blights are the weakest and smallest of the dream kin. Unfortunately, they are also the dream kin most likely to be encountered by common folk. Night blights take pleasure in robbing mortals of sleep, or interrupting their dreams and other evening delights. They take great pleasure in tormenting children by hiding under their beds or leaping from their clothes chests or closets.

It is unclear as to what role night blights play among the dream kin. Some scholars suggest that night blights seek to limit the overflow of dream energy into the Land of Dreams, thereby lessening the work of their kin. Others offer that night blights are naughty, little thoughts given sentience by Churabus for her own amusement. Many suspect that the night blights have no reason and just are. Whatever the case, night blights, while not evil, are incredibly aggravating,

gleefully doing all they can to antagonize those unfortunate enough to draw their attentions. Just as suddenly as they appear, night blights are as likely to disappear.

## Combat

Night blights rarely come out into the open, preferring to hide in the shadows bumping things, giggling, or otherwise being obnoxious. Indeed, if uncovered, night blights are prone to greater teleport away. However, in the times during which they swarm, night blights may well attack aggressors for a few rounds until they bore of the confrontation or begin to fall.

**Blighter (Su):** Night blights are, appropriately, “little blighters.” They seem to have no reason to exist other than to antagonize those attempting to find a restful sleep... Or attempting to do anything at all. With their incessant giggling and squealing, night blights grate on the nerves. Not only can one not sleep while a night blight is within 60 feet, a victim suffers a -2 penalty to all attacks, checks, saves, or other actions. Attacks against a blighter suffer a -4 penalty from the incredibly fury brought on by seeing the little creature laughing at and taunting a victim.

**Spell-like Abilities:** At will – *detect law, detect thoughts, greater teleport, invisibility*; 1/day – *cause fear*. Caster level 6<sup>th</sup>. DC 12 + spell level.

## VAGARY

Large Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Incorporeal)

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	19d8+114 (199 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+12 (+8 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
<b>Speed:</b>	Fly 90 ft. (perfect)
<b>AC:</b>	25 (-1 size, +9 deflection, +8 Dexterity), touch 12, flat-footed 22
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+19/ –
<b>Attack:</b>	Incorporeal touch +27 (1d8 plus nightmare touch)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Incorporeal touch +27 (1d8 plus nightmare touch)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft./10 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Alter ego, aura of night, dream-walk, living sleep, nightmare touch, spell-like abilities, <i>summon dream-kin</i> , unshackled ego
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Damage Reduction 15/cold iron and lawful, dream kin qualities, spell resistance 32, wildest dreams
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +17, Ref +19, Will +12
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str –, Dex 26, Con 22, Int 22, Wis 8, Cha 28
<b>Skills:</b>	Bluff +33, Concentration +22,

Diplomacy +13, Disguise +9 (+11 when acting in character), Escape Artist +28, Gather Information +31, Hide +26, Intimidate +35, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (the planes) +28, Listen +21, Perform (oratory) +31, Search +28, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +28, Spot +21, Survival +21 (+23 on other planes, +23 when following tracks) Fly-by Attack, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Persuasive, Quicken Spell-like Ability (*deeper darkness*), Quicken Spell-like Ability (*phantasmal killer*), Stealthy  
**Environment:** The Ever-Changing Chaos of Limbo or the Land of Dreams  
**Organization:** Solitary  
**Challenge Rating:** 17  
**Treasure:** Standard  
**Alignment:** Always Chaotic Neutral  
**Advancement:** 20 – 38 (Large), 39 – 57 (Huge)

### Feats:

### Environment:

### Organization:

### Challenge Rating:

### Treasure:

### Alignment:

### Advancement:

*Everyone in the courtyard is screaming. Some are raking their nails across their skin, peeling away the flesh. Others are pulling the hair from their heads. Some lie dead near the statues and pillars they ran into head first. As you move through the living nightmare, the baron stumbles before you, howling for his daughter; abruptly, he falls over. An undulating, amorphous black form issues from his convulsing body. Soon, it floats above you, a large black storm. As misty tendrils reach out, you see your greatest fears coming to life!*

Vagaries are among the most powerful dream-kin and probably the most dangerous. Vagaries are capricious; at one moment, a vagary may be docile and even playful, yet at the next moment, it becomes arrogant and threatening. The only constant with a vagary is that it believes that the lives of mortals are dull, almost meaningless affairs that only get interesting when they sleep. Thus, when vagaries encounter mortals, they always seek to view or experience the lives hidden within their dreams. Vagaries rarely ask permission and have little concern about the timing of their entertainment.

Vagaries are believed to represent the fluid nature of dreams, although scholars are at a lost in determining what, if any, role they play in the collection of dream energy. Some have suggested that vagaries are actually free roaming dream-kin, divorced from any responsibility to Churabus.

## Combat

A vagary attacks in a surprisingly organized fashion. It will swiftly assess the most threatening opponent and unleash its alter ego against it. It will swarm troublesome opponents with summoned creatures while it targets the least bothersome with its nightmare touch attacks. A vagary makes heavy use of spell-like abilities and never hesitates to *teleport* away from imminent destruction. Of all the known dream-kin, a vagary is the most likely to keep track of those that bested it in combat, haunting them in their slumber.

**Alter Ego (Su):** A vagary has the ability to completely rend a being's perception of reality, plunging another into a living dream or walking nightmare. Thrice a day, a vagary can alter ego one target within 90 feet. If the victim fails a Will saving throw DC 28, the victim immediately becomes insane as per *symbol of insanity*; this madness can only be overcome by a *miracle* or *wish*. After 1d6 rounds, the victim makes another Will saving throw DC 28. Success allows the *insanity* to persist until cured as described. If the victim fails the save, the victim's relationship to the reality of the Mortal Coil begins to deteriorate. Each round, the victim will suffer 1d4 points of damage to his Constitution and Wisdom. The final fate of a victim suffering from alter ego depends upon which ability score reaches 0 first. If the Constitution reaches 0, the victim's physical body dies; however, rather than the soul departing for the appropriate resting place in the Beyond, the soul is sent hurtling into the Land of Dreams in a persistent insane state. Such victims take on the incorporeal trait and cannot physically interact with anything (they cannot cast spells, use melee weapons, move items, or even speak). If the Wisdom reaches 0, the victim's mind dies, although the body persists in a comatose state. A mind so lost cannot be restored by any mortal means, although it is possible that a *miracle* may have some affect. The ability score loss can only be halted only by a *remove curse* followed by a *greater restoration*; a separate *greater restoration* must be cast to restore damaged ability scores. The first portion of alter ego is a mind-affecting, compulsion. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Aura of Night (Au):** A vagary emanates a 20 foot aura that causes fatigue. Any creature within the aura must succeed a Will save 28 to resist. Failure results in the victim being overcome with fatigue, falling to the ground unconscious for one round per the vagary's HD. A successful save imposes a -2 penalty on all actions while one re-

mains within the aura's radius. A creature that has successfully resisted aura of slumber cannot be affected by it for the next 24 hours. A vagary may continue or discontinue its aura as a free action. Aura of slumber is a mind-affecting, compulsion. The save DC is Charisma based.

**Dreamwalk (Su):** Three times per day, a vagary may attempt to take control the bodies of sleeping mortals within a 30 foot radius. It may control as many victims as half its HD. Victims receive a Will save, DC 28, to ignore the effect and continue in their slumber. Those who fail are under the explicit command of the vagary. Most commands are followed without hesitation for 2d10 rounds so long as the commands do not directly and/or immediately risk the life of the sleepwalker. If the life of the sleepwalker is put at risk (walking off a high ledge, having less than 10% of total hit points), the victim is allowed another Will save DC 28 for each round his life is threatened. If the victim awakens, he regains complete control of his body. Dreamwalk is mind-affecting compulsion. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Living Sleep (Su):** Like the dreamstalker, a vagary may attempt to possess the body of a mortal as described in the lesser dream-kins dream merge power. However, the vagary's possession power is far more potent than that of its lesser kin. All saves associated with living sleep are at DC 28. Secondly, the vagary may possess as a move equivalent action up to three times a day. Third, sleeping victims suffer a -6 penalty to saves against living sleep. Fourth, a vagary may possess any creature that sleeps (most aberrations, dragons, and similar creatures can be affected). Unlike dreamstalkers, which prefer to possess sleeping targets, the vagary seems to have no preference. The Wisdom damage one suffers due to vagary possession is 4 points over an eight hour period; the vagary is under no compulsion to grant bonuses to skill checks, although if it does so it grants a +4 bonus. While possessing waking creatures, not only does the vagary impose 2 Wisdom points of damage every 1d4 rounds, the vagary also receives 4 hit points each round; these hit points allow the vagary to exceed its normal allotment as bonus hit points.

**Nightmare Touch (Su):** With a successful melee attack with its pseudopods, a vagary can unleash its nightmare touch. Those that fail a Will save DC 28 see themselves covered by the most horrific, frightful things. For some, the image is that of spider, for others it is blood. Whatever the case, the victim will attempt to rid himself of whatever

he sees by attacking himself to the best of his ability beginning on his next round. The victim uses his touch armor class for the purposes of harming himself with a melee weapon or touch attack spell. Each round the victim successfully harms himself, he will receive another Will save DC 28; the save DC is reduced by 1 for every 10 points of damage the victim deals to himself. The visions persist until the Will save is successful. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will – *chaos hammer, cloak of chaos, daze monster, deep slumber, deeper darkness, detect law, detect thoughts, dispel law, dream, gentle repose, greater dispel magic, greater teleport, hypnotism, magic circle against law, nightmare, phantasmal killer, waves of exhaustion*; 3/day – *demand, eyebite, mind fog, polymorph any object, power word stun*; 1/day – *scintillating pattern, wish*. Caster level 19<sup>th</sup>, DC 19 + spell level.

**Summon dream-kin (Sp):** Once a day a vagary can automatically summon 4d10 night blights, 2d10 craves, or 1d6 dreamstalkers. This ability is the equivalent of a 9<sup>th</sup> level spell.

**Unshackled Ego (Su):** A vagary may cause mortals to abandon any moral restrictions or any feeling of guilt. All within 60 feet of a vagary that fail a Will save DC 28 may find that they feel free to behave in a manner unbecoming of any Lawful alignment. In most cases, an affected victim will not immediately realize that his attitudes have shifted; however, when faced with an issue related to his moral standing, the victim will always be forced to make the choice of convenience or pleasure rather than that of duty. Thus, if a paladin had the choice of saving a damsel in distress from ruffians or going to bar for a drink or some romance, he would select the latter. As another example, if a LN monk had to chose between helping a friend out of a scrap or selling him out for monetary gain, the monk would go with the second option. In any case, unshackled ego persists until a *remove curse* spell is cast on the victim. A vagary does not use this ability in order to sew evil; rather, it uses it capriciously like all its powers and usually because it finds it amusing to see societal norms and expectations turned on their heads. For those classes for whom alignment-based behavior is important, morally dark actions may have future consequences.

**Wildest Dream (Su):** Thrice per day, a vagary may grant another's *wish*. However, a vagary rarely waits to be asked for a *wish*. Instead, a vagary

uses reads the surface thoughts of those within 60 feet of its person, randomly selecting one target from which to acquire the *wish*. The results of the *wish* are always immediate. For those desirous of money, all they touch (including their clothes) turns to platinum; for those in search of fame, the head of a young dragon appears at their feet... with the livid mature adult dragon mother behind the would-be slayer; for those desperate to escape certain death, they become permanently incorporeal. There have been relatively few cases in which a target's wildest dream has been achieved without some unexpected consequence.

## **DURUBAN**

### **1<sup>st</sup> – Level Warrior**

#### **Medium-Sized Humanoid**

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	1d8 +1 (5 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	-1 (-1 Dex)
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft.
<b>AC:</b>	14 (-1 Dex, +2 natural armor, +3 studded leather), touch 9, flat-footed 14
<b>Attacks:</b>	Shortbow +1 ranged (1d6/x3) or heavy mace +2 melee (1d8 + 1/x2)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Shortbow +1 ranged (1d6/x3) or heavy mace +2 melee (1d8 + 1/x2)
<b>Face/Reach:</b>	5 ft. /5 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Duruban traits, fire resistance 10, low-light vision
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +3, Ref -1, Will -2*
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 13, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 7, Cha 6
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +5, Intimidate +2, Jump +5
<b>Feats:</b>	Weapon Focus (shortbow)
<b>Environment:</b>	Temperate Plains
<b>Organization:</b>	Team (2 – 5), squad (6 – 17 plus 1 3 <sup>rd</sup> level leader), or gathering (20 – 80 plus 20% non-combatants plus 1 3 <sup>ed</sup> level sergeant per 6 adults, 3 5 <sup>th</sup> level lieutenants, and 1 7 <sup>th</sup> level captain)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	1
<b>Treasure:</b>	Standard coins; double goods; standard items
<b>Alignment:</b>	Usually Neutral evil
<b>Advancement:</b>	By character class
<b>ECL:</b>	+1

The *Cilidian* states that the duruban were the sixth race created by the saldrash. For over 260 years, not a single member of the duruban race has been seen in Drm; scholars believe that they are an extinct race.

Duruban were completely hairless, their skin stretched over their bones like burnished leather.

Skin color tended to be a rich yellow-brown. Duruban muscles appeared atrophied, giving them an almost emaciated look. The ends of their hands and feet ended in hard, horn-like growths similar to claws; these were generally filed down to the point of being useless in combat. Duruban faces betrayed no discernable emotion due to a lack of elasticity and their eyes, over-shadowed by heavy brows, ranged in color from pale yellows to dark, murky reds. In place of noses, they had slight ridges under which were two small nostrils. Their teeth were naturally sharp and very hard, but the duruban had taken to filing them down as they did their "claws." The tops of their heads, their spinal column, and the point where their jaws connected to the skull were lined with bony, horn-like ridges. Males tended to have very long jaw-spines and chin-spines while females had long, curving horns on the tops of their heads. Both genders had taken to allowing these horns to grow and had discovered ways to shape them into elaborate designs; however, the horns were too brittle for use in combat. Due to the way their skin stretched across their bodies, joints visibly protruded and ended in spine-like protrusions; while the males let these grow to significant lengths (a foot or so) to attract mates, females filed these protrusions down.

Duruban rarely spoke the languages of others, keeping to their own Duron language. If they did learn another language, it would be Common or Hobgoblin.

Most duruban encountered were 1<sup>st</sup> level warriors as represented above.

### Combat

Duruban preferred to attack en masse by ambushing foes from a distance with ranged weapons. Typically, encounters in which there are half-again as many duruban hit dice over the total hit dice of potential targets would result in duruban aggression; if the reverse proved true, duruban typically fled or attempted to hide. In melee combat, duruban favor blunt weapons.

**Duruban Traits (Ex):** Duruban possessed the following racial traits.

- Duruban moved in a halting, stiff fashion, suffering a -2 racial penalty to their Dexterity.
- Duruban were extremely inquisitive and philosophical, benefiting from a +2 racial bonus to their Intelligence.

- Duruban had difficulty interacting well with other races, even if it was in their best interest to do so. That, coupled with their inability to see beyond the "black and white" of their culture, resulted in a -2 racial penalty to Wisdom.
- Duruban hated all other races with almost palpable force, suffering a -2 racial penalty to Charisma.
- Duruban possess a racial proficiency with shortbows, longbows, composite shortbows, composite longbows and any traditional ranged weapon.
- In situations in which they outnumbered their adversary by half, duruban were immune to compulsion and fear spells.
- Duruban received a +2 racial bonus to Will saves against spells or effects from the school of enchantment.
- The leathery skin of the duruban made them resistant to fire and heat-based attacks. Duruban possessed fire resistance 10.
- The leathery skin of the Duruban was resilient, granting them a +2 bonus to their natural armor.
- Duruban possessed low-light vision.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Duron.
- Favored Class: Wizard (evoker)
- Level Adjustment: +1

The duruban warrior presented here had the following ability scores before racial adjustments: Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

### Duruban Society

Duruban were once an extremely prosperous and powerful race in Drm. However, their overwhelming desire to eradicate the world of all non-duruban caused many races that would otherwise battle each other to work together to eliminate the duruban. As a result, many duruban nations crumbled over the Ages until by the end of the Age of Glory only one remained, Curoboria, which was located in Lands of the Pact. Alongside smaller cities and towns in the Wynding River Valley,

Curoborian duruban managed to adapt their xenophobic ways enough to benefit themselves by allowing select members of their race to interact with other species while they barred access to their lands. Some time near the end of the Age of Enlightenment, these remaining duruban disappeared entirely from the face of Drm. Due to their self-imposed isolation, it took decades for most other peoples to notice that the duruban as a race had completely disappeared. To this day, no one knows what became of this once powerful race.

The surfaces of these cities were described as almost dead with silence, although there were well concealed murder holes where sentries were posted. For the few non-duruban who have traveled to the underground locations, there is a stiff formality of behavior alien to other Humen. Fully 20% of a given population will be composed of non-combatants, usually children.

The chief duruban god was the Aldra Masteronus.

## IRUDYTE

Huge Aberration (Evil, Extraplanar, Incorporeal, Psionic)

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	27d8+270 (486 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+9 (+5 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)
<b>Speed:</b>	Fly 140 ft. (perfect)
<b>AC:</b>	35 (+7 deflection, +5 Dexterity, +15 natural, -2 size), touch 20, flat-footed 30
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+20/+28
<b>Attack:</b>	Incorporeal strike +18 melee (2d6 plus 1d4 Int)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	4 Incorporeal strikes +18/+18/+18/+18 melee (2d6 plus 1d4 Int)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	15ft. /15ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Multi-power, powers, stupefying touch
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Damage reduction 15/epic and good; darkvision 60 ft.; divine rank 0; hypnotic presence, immunity to cold and poison; power resistance 33; telepathy 1000 ft.
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +17, Ref +12, Will +20
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str -, Dex 20, Con 30 Int 26, Wis 20, Cha 25
<b>Skills:</b>	Bluff +37, Concentration +40, Diplomacy +30, Disguise +7 (+11 acting in character), Intimidate +34, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +23, Knowledge (psionics) +38, Knowledge (religion) +23, Listen +20, Psicraft +42 (+46 with power stones), Search +23, Sense Motive +35, Spellcraft

### Feats:

### Epic Feats:

### Environment:

### Organization:

### Challenge Rating:

### Treasure:

### Alignment:

+17, Spot +15, Survival +5 (+7 tracking, +7 underground), Use Psionic Device +38 (+42 with power stones)  
 Burrowing Power, Craft Psicrown, Craft Universal Item, Improved Initiative, Inquisitor, Psionic Endowment, Psionic Meditation, Unconditional Power  
 Epic Psionic Focus, Improved Manifestation  
 Any land and underground (The Lands Below)  
 Solitary, pair, or with slaves  
 21  
 Triple Standard  
 Neutral Evil

*Emerging from the scalding mists of the subterranean, boiling lake is a creature that should not be. Whispering, hissing, and moaning voices accompany crackling and buzzing sounds as the thing hovers over the steam pool. Easily 20 feet in diameter, this transparent monstrosity vaguely resembles a pulsing, human brain. Sprouting from the sides of the lower portion of the creature are four long, emaciated arms that end in three multi-jointed, nimble fingers. Seven globes issuing a myriad of colors are spread across the base of the creature's body. As the creature begins to swiftly float towards you, rotating as it does so, a spectrum of soothing colors begin to revolve around the creature, lulling you into a false sense of calm...*

The irudyte are one of the aulspawn, the first sentient creatures to populate Midlorr. Virtually god-like, these creatures contested the hegemony of the other aulspawn, particularly the dragons, saldrash, and the zar, during the Dawn Before the Dawn. Possessing powers over the minds and hearts of other creatures, the terrible irudyte sought to enslave all others – even their own kind – to their bidding. However, the irudyte were cast into the Lands Below along with their various creations by the saldrash. In the Lands Below, the irudyte have forged monstrous empires that, when they aren't warring against each other, seek to find the means to destroy the Epoc Nodes that keep them trapped from the world of Midlorr.

### Combat

Irudyte are selfish individuals, each with its own unique way of handling adversaries. However, most irudyte will attack with their powers before entering into melee unless they are facing either other psionic users or magic users, hoping to use

their stupefying touch against them.

The irudyte detailed below would likely attempt to surprise adversaries, casting *affinity field* and *mass cloud mind* before entering into combat. In the second round, it would cast *psychic crush* on fighters and *decerebrate* on spellcasters or rogues. In the third round, it would target all with an *ultrablast* and then attempt to *retrieve* powerful magic or psionic items from any enemies still standing. If at any time it suffers more than 25 points of damage from one attack, the irudyte would cast *hostile empathic transfer* on any adversary that seems largely unaffected by its attacks.

**Divine Rank 0:** As an aulspawn, an irudyte enjoys a degree of divinity. An irudyte is immune to polymorphing, petrification, or any other attack that alters its form. The irudyte is not subject to energy drain, ability drain, or ability damage. The irudyte is immune to mind-affecting effects. An irudyte is immortal and cannot die from natural causes. An irudyte does not age, and it does not need to eat, sleep, or breath. The only way for an irudyte to die is through special circumstances.

**Hypnotic Presence (Su):** An irudyte, in its perpetual revolution, also exudes a kaleidoscope of colors. At times soothing, at other times frenetic, and at other times fiery and kinetic, these colors flare from the irudyte's seven eyes and can render lesser creatures susceptible to the creature's hypnotic power. This hypnotic presence affects any creature within 20 feet that possesses fewer hit dice than the irudyte to varying degrees if he fails the Will save DC 30 (the DC is Charisma based):

- 10 HD or less: Unconscious for 1d8 rounds, then stunned for 1d8 rounds, and then confused for 1d8 rounds (treat an unconscious result as stunned for nonliving creatures).
- 11 HD to 20 HD: Stunned for 1d8 rounds, then confused for 1d8 rounds.
- 21 or more: Confused for 1d8 rounds.

(A sightless creature is not affected by an irudyte's hypnotic presence).

Those that successfully save against an irudyte's hypnotic presence are immune to it for the duration that they are within sight of the creature. If the irudyte is out of sight for at least an hour, future encounters require a save.

Hypnotic presence is a mind-affecting effect.

**Multi-power (Ex):** An irudyte may cast two powers per round so long as both powers require no more than one standard action to execute.

**Psionic Powers:** An irudyte manifests powers as a psion (telepath) of 20<sup>th</sup> level. The save DCs are Intelligence based.

*Typical Psion Powers Known* (power points 442, save DC 18 + power level): 1<sup>st</sup> – *conceal thoughts*, *detect psionics*, *empathy*, *psionic charm*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *control sound*, *id insinuation*, *psionic suggestion*, *read thoughts* 3<sup>rd</sup> – *dispel psionics*, *empathic transfer (hostile)*, *energy wall*, *false sensory input*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *correspond*, *psionic dominate*, *psionic modify memory*, *trace teleport*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *catapsi*, *mind probe*, *psionic major creation*, *psychic crush*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *mass cloud mind*, *mind switch*, *remote view trap*, *retrieve*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *decerebrate*, *divert teleport*, *personal mindblank*, *ultrablast*; 8<sup>th</sup> – *mind seed*, *psionic greater teleport*, *recall death*, *true metabolism*; 9<sup>th</sup> – *affinity field*, *microcosm*, *psychic surgery*, *reality revision*.

**Stupefying Touch (Su):** If an irudyte succeeds in two incorporeal strikes against the same creature in a round, it may attempt to affect that creature with its stupefying touch. If the victim fails a Will save DC 30, he suffers 1d4 points of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma damage depending upon the irudyte's intent. The entirety of this value is added to the irudyte's power point reserve, allowing the creature to go beyond its maximum. In the event of a successful critical hit from either incorporeal strike, the victim suffers drain rather than damage. The Will DC is Charisma based.

## **MIST WOLF**

### **Medium-Sized Magical Beast**

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	4d10+12 (34 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+3 (+3 Dex)
<b>Speed:</b>	50 ft.
<b>AC:</b>	17 (+3 Dexterity, +2 natural armor, +2 profane), touch 15, flat-footed 14
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+4/+6
<b>Attack:</b>	Bite +7 melee (1d6+2)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Bite +7 melee (1d6+2)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Freezing fog, trip
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Darkvision 60 ft., fog step, mist armor, mist aura, scent
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 15, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 14

<b>Skills:</b>	Hide +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +5, Survival +4*
<b>Feats:</b>	Combat Reflexes, Weapon Finesse
<b>Environment:</b>	Worm's Wood, or any arctic tundra, dark forest or temperate forest
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary, pair, or pack (3-8)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	4
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Alignment:</b>	Always Neutral Evil
<b>Advancement:</b>	5 – 6 HD (Medium); 7 – 11 HD (Large)

*The snarl floats out from the woods just before the beast that issued it. Surrounded by a cold mist, it looks like a white and gray wolf with glowing, pupilless eyes. Its hackles raised, it bares its teeth, displaying pristine, unusually long fangs. It seems to slowly glide over the ground, the mist flowing around it suddenly twinkling. The sight makes you feel lethargic and you find it difficult to take your eyes away from the shining teeth and twinkling lights...*

Mist wolves are one of the many wolf species that plague Worm's Wood. Almost exclusively nocturnal, mist wolves are often mistaken for canine spirits. However, mist wolves are very much alive and, like many of the wolf species native to Worm's Wood, they are clearly evil, often slaughtering far beyond their need to eat.

Mist wolves are said to be linked to the cult of Ostensis and other servants of evil woodland gods and beings. The credulity of this rumored relationship is unknown, but it is believed that mist wolves often appear in place of common wolves when summoned by vampires and other creatures of the night in Worm's Wood and similar locations.

## Combat

Mist wolves attempt to sneak up to their targets. When in packs, mist wolves surround their targets before lopping in for the attack. Packs of mist wolves begin an assault with their freezing fog, immediately followed by their mist aura. Lone mist wolves often harass potential victims throughout the night in preparation for a later attack from the entire pack. Mist wolves often try to grab unconscious victims and flee with them using their fog step.

**Fog Step (Su):** Once per night, a mist wolf can leap into the surrounding fog and disappear. In truth, the mist wolf mimics an effect similar to a

*dimension door*, allowing the beast to make a hasty retreat. This *dimension door* behaves as if cast by an 8<sup>th</sup> level caster. Furthermore, a mist wolf can attempt to carry off unconscious victims weighing up to 200 pounds with its fog step. The victim receives a Will save DC 14 to resist the effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Freezing Fog (Su):** A pack of four or more mist wolves can generate a freezing fog once per night. As a full round action, four or more wolves no further than five feet apart can generate an chilly fog that expands ten feet from each wolf. Those within the area of effect must make a Fortitude save DC 15 or suffer 1d6 points of cold damage and the effects of the *slow* spell cast at 4<sup>th</sup> level; victims who successfully save only succumb to the *slow* effect at half duration and suffer no damage. Although mist wolves are immune to the freezing fog of their species, they possess no special resistance or immunity to cold attacks. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Mist Armor (Ex):** A mist wolf's smoke-like pelt causes an odd effect that makes the beast appear to be moving slowly. This trick on the senses grants a mist wolf a +2 profane bonus to AC and a +2 profane bonus to Hide skill checks; mist armor also grants the wolf 20% displacement.

**Mist Aura (Su):** By causing the mist surrounding them to pulse and flow in a surreal fashion, two or more mist wolves can create an effect similar to a *hypnotic pattern* cast at 8<sup>th</sup> level once per night as a full round action. Every two additional mist wolves grant an additional caster level to the spell for determining the total number of HD affected. A Will save DC 14 is necessary to overcome the effect. Mist wolves often interrupt the duration of the effect by attacking affected victims. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Trip:** A mist wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+2 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the mist wolf.

**Skills:** Mist wolves have a +1 racial bonuses to Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks.

Mist wolves have a +2 racial bonus to Hide checks.

\*Mist Wolves have a +8 racial bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent.



## Variant Rule: Damage Reduction Enhancement Requirement

With the transition from 3.0 to 3.5, damage reduction received a substantial overhaul. The variety of material requirements to successfully breach damage reduction ensures accurate challenge ratings by forcing those who would do battle with specific to have the precise weapons. It does not matter how many pluses a magic sword has when used against a werewolf; if it isn't a silver sword, the sword's damage will be lessened. Although most damage reduction changes were in order, the magic material requirement may be lacking to some gamers.

With the magic material, any weapon with a + X variable is considered strong enough for the purpose of breaching damage reduction for creatures with DR X/magic. While this is a very simple manner to handle basic magic weapons, it does not allow for certain monster, like dragons, to benefit from having damage reduction. Many PCs will have access to +1 weapons relatively early in their careers. A +1 *long sword* is as effective at breaching the damage reduction of a young adult red dragon as it is against a great red wyrm. While it is true that a great red wyrm is going to destroy a party of 6<sup>th</sup> level characters with ease, the ability for such a relatively low-level weapon to breach its scales as effectively as it would breach the scales of a much younger, weaker dragon may not suit some. This variant rule offers greater benefit to having higher ranked enhancements as well as giving dragons, and other creatures with the DR X/magic, a better fighting chance.

For every damage reduction increase of 5, the required enhancement bonus should increase by +1. Thus, in the case of most dragons, the following would be the damage reduction progression:

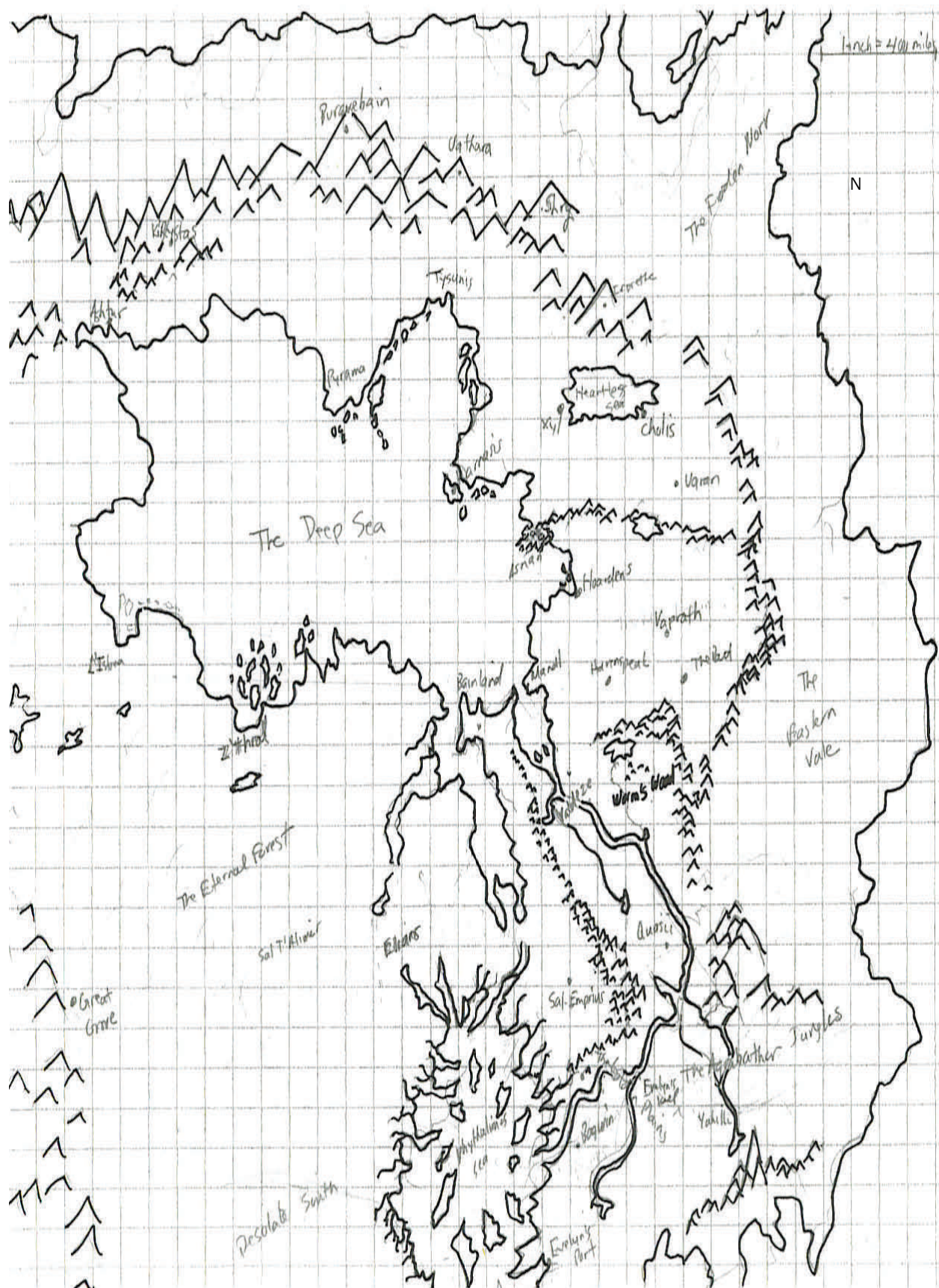
Once a dragon exceeds the +5 for the enhancement requirement, the "magic" is replaced by "epic" and the increase continues (this differs from the explanation for epic dragons as described in the *Epic Level Handbook*).

Other creatures would also benefit from this variant. A lich, for example, would receive DR 15/bludgeoning and magic +3.

Finally, this variant would impact how creatures strike each other for the purposes of breaching damage reduction. A wyrm red dragon would strike as a magic weapon with a +4 enhancement bonus.

**Table 7 – 1: Damage Reduction Variant**

Age	Damage Reduction	Magic Enhancement Requirement
Young Adult	DR 5/magic	+1
Mature Adult	DR 10/magic	+2
Very Old	DR 15/magic	+3
Wyrms	DR 20/magic	+4



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